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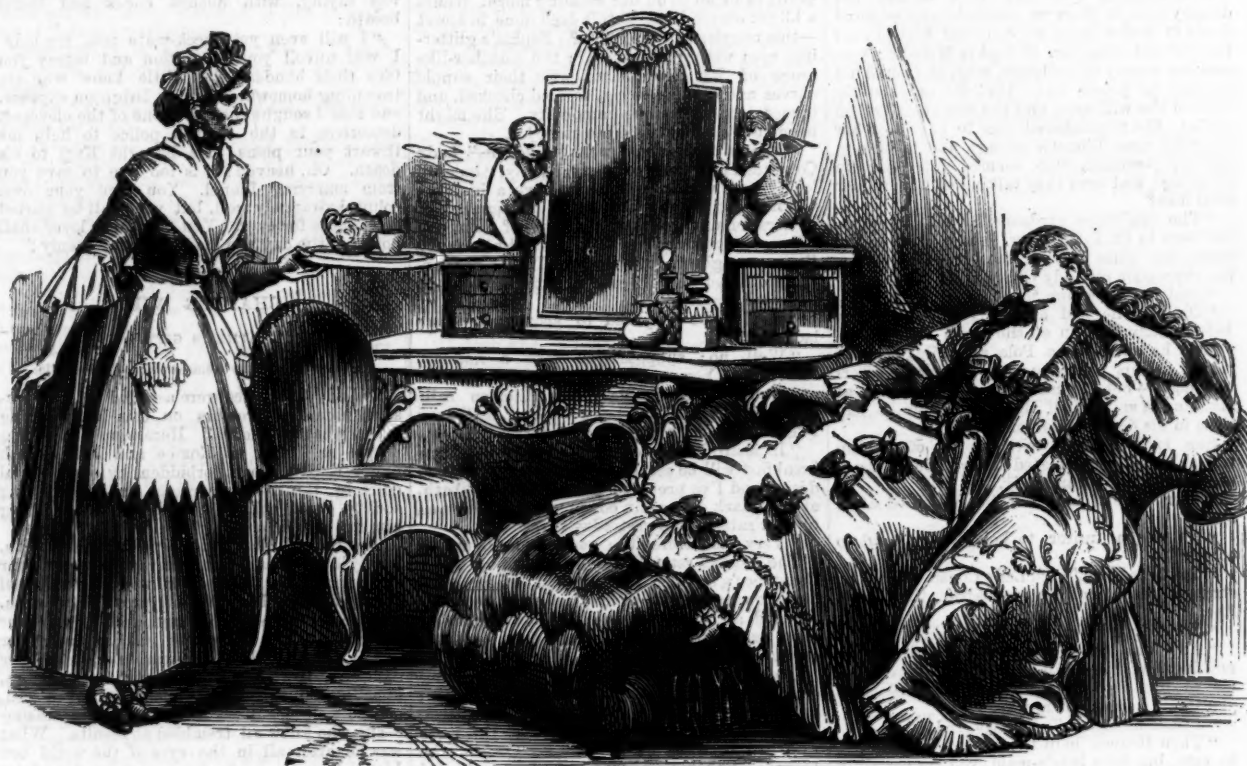
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[WITH INTENT TO BETRAY.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER VII.

A DARK HISTORY.

Alas! that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one.

LADY CONSTANCE HARRINGTON almost worked herself up into a nervous fever during the absence of her father, the earl, and her sister, Lady Violet, at Brighton. But when a young lady of rank and beauty consents to a marriage beneath her, she is generally rapid in drawing matters to a crisis. Would this secret marriage be discovered before Lionel left England for Australia?

Soft and feminine as were her general habits and tastes, on one point alone she became firm and fixed as an ancient Greek—fear, which generally influenced her nature, faded into defiance. Her sister, Lady Violet, never entered her thoughts, save as one to be feared as a dreaded enemy—a woman so haughty and relentless, she would allow nothing to baulk her will.

A landscape gardener! Yes; she knew he was but of humble rank, but then the man made all the difference; love overcomes many scruples, and instead of the weak and inane lordlings and tuft-hunters who visited at the Hall—men she despised as well as shunned—here was a man with all the attributes that form a hero and a gentleman.

This too was her wedding morn. She rose early, and drawing aside the lace curtains of her

window, her eye roamed over the splendid park with its deer among the ferns, and soft lush grasses rising in the autumnal mists. A thousand memories thrilled her as the sunrise dispersed the dewy vapours of the dawn like her own happiness. How it glowed and warmed the earth!

The danger attending her engagement had ended; the desperate step was near; the long agony of expectation was over; soon she would be Lionel's adored and loving wife. And yet the girl trembled. She thought of her mother, the countess, who had died years ago—that poor invalid mother who had so longed to be drawn within the shadow of the grand old oaks in the park once more before she died, and Lady Constance wished that her voice, so long silent, could once more arise and bless her.

"She would have pitied me and forgiven me all, for she suffered, and her heart was gentle and kind," the girl muttered, falling on her knees, and burying her face in her hands. "Lionel, Lionel—soon to be my husband," she repeated, with a wild sob; "what spell have you exercised over my reason? What power is it draws me to you since that day you saved my life? In a few hours—by noon, my dearest, I shall be yours, and they can never more sever us then!"

Her beauty brightened and deepened with her emotion; there was that loveliest light of all to be seen in a woman's eyes, a half veiled splendour such as spring suggests before ripening into summer. And yet all was not at ease in her mind. She fancied one person's suspicions had of late been aroused regarding her actions, and that if one person had been left behind as a spy, that person was Sophia Meredith,

the lady's-maid whom Lady Violet had implicit confidence in. She would hang about Lady Constance, as if loath to depart after having performed the duties of the toilette, and Lady Constance could even now hear her light, careful step outside on the landing, and why should Lionel's face change when that woman was named? Why did he ever seek to avoid her?

To-day she was up full an hour earlier than the other servants, and was just then tapping at her ladyship's door with a cup of tea on a tray.

"Did your ladyship ring?" she asked, on entering. "I fancied you seemed restless last night, and were not quite yourself."

This woman had once been a governess in a Russian family; had also been acquainted with Sir Phoenix Allerton in his earlier days, and had left her situation at St. Petersburg suddenly, and even mysteriously, but Lady Violet had always appeared satisfied with her references, and glad to avail herself of the services of a woman whose civility was unquestionable, and whose cleverness was beyond a doubt.

"I never felt better, Meredith," Lady Constance answered briefly, sipping her tea, "but it is lonely here without my father and sister. I shall be so glad when they return."

"I have a letter from Lady Violet, in which she mentions they will probably return towards the end of next week."

"So soon?"

A shadow stole over the girl's brow, and she half sighed.

"If your ladyship is lonely, why does she consider ten days so soon?" said the maid, with apparent indifference.

Lady Constance started; a vivid flush darted over her face.

"You are nervous, my lady. You change colour. Your hands seem hot and feverish. If you were in Russia we should say you—"

"Why did you leave Russia?" the girl asked, longing to change the conversation, and fixing her large eyes on the lady's maid; "it was never quite clear to me your reason for coming to England."

The woman's eyes had that wicked but dreamy light in them we associate with evil and deeds of darkness—a sudden fear flashed over the girl watching her. If Sophia Meredith were ever her enemy or gaoleress, why, she would not hesitate to poison her. Oh! the cruel, steely light of the wild eyes, and the uncertain broken smile! She remembered once to have seen her hovering near Lionel's cottage and talking to the gipsy-woman, who seemed interested in listening; and were they talking of her and her fatal love?

"The landscape gardener, Lionel Hargrave, has been in St. Petersburg," she said, standing before the glass so that she could better view the expression on Lady Constance's face.

"And you know him then?"

"Oh, yes; he had a variety of adventures before settling down at the Park. It was suspected he sheltered a Pole, an exile; a great friend of his obnoxious to the State—Karl Czerposki—but the man was run to earth at last, and in spite of all Hargrave's courage and risks in his defence, he was shot."

She spoke almost with an air of wanton triumph, as if she defeated an invisible influence she could laugh at and defy.

"Poor fellow, how sad to be killed after all."

"He was a traitor to holy Russia, and to others."

"You hated him," said Lady Constance, as the strange broken smile played about the other's lips.

"Yes, I hated him, and with good reason."

"And was your vengeance satisfied with nothing but his death, for I believe you betrayed him into their hands. You look as if you would have no mercy."

"I have no mercy," she answered.

"Then Heaven help those who have to plead in vain, but for a lady's maid you are certainly eccentric. Are we," laughing lightly, "playing at melo-drama?"

"You may be, your ladyship, perhaps on the verge of a precipice."

"Meredith! do you dare address me with that fitful insolence? I have borne much from you because Lady Violet likes you, and I believed you had been reared and educated in a ladylike manner, but never speak to me in that tone again."

Sophia Meredith drew in her lips, and again the cruel mocking light shone in her eyes.

"People have often told me I am clever, my lady, that I guess to intuition what is going on in the minds of others. When Karl defied my power, I warned him not to hold it too lightly—not to stand in my way, when the man I loved dearer than life or honour believed in my truth and affection. He spurned me, ay, and defamed me too, on the brink of marriage. You start, my lady, as if you saw a spectre. My wedding dress was made. I had my heart's desire almost granted. My lover had parted from me with a kiss that consecrated our love as on an altar, and then falsehoods were fabricated; they spoke of Paris, of a certain Count D'Artois, a careless, idle man of the world, who had reared me, and faithful to his promise to my mother on her death-bed, sheltered me from want till his death, and then the falsehoods, hatched with infamous care, reached his ears—he the soul of truth, and we parted as lovers for ever—but my heart-strings are still wound round his never to be severed save with my death, and I accepted banishment from fashion and comfort and society to live in a sepulchre, to mix with a herd I despise, because I sometimes see him."

Lady Constance rose and almost sprang towards her maid. It was Lionel Hargrave she

indicated—the handsome lover, the brave, courageous man who had stood by his friend to the last, and who had been undecieved in time.

Here then stood her remorseless enemy. Here then stood a demon to be out-matched and overcome. She was silent; that emphatic declaration of implacable hatred was still ringing in her ears. How much had Meredith learnt? how much guessed of her actions? Strange words to listen to on her wedding morn. Would a blight attach itself to this deed done in secret—this marriage in the dark? Sophia's glittering eyes were now averted; the panther-like grace of her movements, with their supple curves and cat-like swing, seemed checked, and turned into statue-like immobility. She might have been a Niobe turned to stone!

"Your story is a somewhat tragic one," Lady Constance endeavoured to say, lightly, "but you look like a woman who must have a history; and now don't you think we've had enough of horrors for a mild autumnal morning? You can tell me the rest another day. I shall next fancy I've seen a ghost. By-the-bye, I wish the carriage ordered at half-past nine to drive me to Swinford Station."

"Shall I be required to accompany your ladyship?"

"Well, no; suppose you take a holiday, Meredith. You could hardly have a better opportunity, and if Sir Hugh Allerton calls give him this note from Lady Violet. He'll very likely run down to Brighton to-morrow."

"It shall be done, your ladyship. Your breakfast will be served in your boudoir as you desire, and I've prepared your ladyship's bath, and the dark grey satin costume which I altered to your satisfaction yesterday is ready."

"Very well, Meredith; you may leave me."

The woman retired, almost baffled by Lady Constance's manner, but she had other reasons for knowing her suspicions had not been ill-founded, and that curious old gipsy, something more than a mere foolish chatterbox, with her omens and threats.

Once again Lady Constance gave way to her emotions; strange misgivings stole over her; her happiness was giving way to anguish. What was this tale Meredith told of the lover who had been so nearly won? Could it be Lionel? She remembered he had once hinted that as a boy of eighteen he had been led away by the dangerous wiles and intrigues of a wicked and abandoned woman; that he, had never loved her, but had been saved in time from ruin and misery. Yes, there were traces of beauty in that dark, mocking face, and the woman's cleverness and ability might do much, and her worship must have flattered the self-love of a youth. She tried to banish all memory of Sophia Meredith. She thought of her with disgust and even loathing.

"How could Violet ever have engaged such a creature to wait on us?" was her inward reflection, "unless it was as a spy on me?"

A spy! the very words rang in her ears like a moan of doom; but soon her gloomy surmises gave way to brighter ones. The morning was beautiful, the golden sunshine just deepening the rising mists, and the remaining flowers of summer scented the air with their entrancing perfumes. She dressed slowly, and opening her magnificent jewel-case, a work of art of rarest workmanship, the present of Sir Hugh Allerton, took out a superb opal and diamond ring, and also a pearl hoop one, as her presents to Lionel. She counted over bank-notes to the value of one hundred pounds, and placed them in the bosom of her dress with a few loose sovereigns in her purse. She had never known the want of money, and a few hundreds more or less seemed of little concern to the girl at a time like this.

"What a quietly-dressed bride I look," she said, turning to her mirror. "Is it not better than vulgar parade and noisy show? But is the bond of secrecy a crime for which I must suffer? They would far sooner see me in my coffin than wedded to him."

"If you please, my lady, the carriage waits," said the lady's maid, eyeing her keenly, "and

the school-children have just sent you a humble offering of some flowers, as it's harvest-time rejoicings."

Flowers, joyful emblems, surely they came as a blessing. The poor children had remembered her. No flowers would be strewn along her bridal path to the old moss-grown church, but they awaited her here. She did not notice the sky was darkening, and that the opal ring was growing dull. Meanwhile Sophia Meredith was saying, with flushed cheek and bated breath:

"I will even yet check-mate you, my lady. I will unveil your deception and betray you into their hands. You little know who are travelling homewards by the Brighton express, and that I sought the aid of one of the cleverest detectives in the French police to help me thwart your plans. He thought Karl to his death. Oh, heaven! it is too late to save you from marrying Lionel. You kept your own counsel strangely well, but you shall be parted afterwards for ever. You and your lover shall both rue the day you made me your enemy!"

CHAPTER VIII.

APHRA'S GIFT.

And hopes that ate themselves on dust and die.

IF Lady Constance were assailed with a thousand nameless tremors on this her wedding morn, what of Lionel? Here were two young people as loving as Romeo and Juliet, both under a social ban, forbidden by every social edict to think of marriage, and yet talking society, cruel bully, by the board, and defying him through all.

The Earl of Harrington—perfect gentleman, kindly host—would rather have seen his younger daughter in her coffin than wedded to Lionel Hargrave, and Lady Violet, proud, imperious, merciless Violet—would have shed no tear over the coffin of the sister who had disgraced her family, but neither the earl nor his elder daughter intruded at present; only Aphra, kneeling on a well-worn hassock by Lionel, offered well-meant words of counsel and blessing—she who knew all trembled at results. What was he after all in the eyes of the world but Lionel Hargrave, a landscape gardener, and she the daughter of a hundred earls. Aphra remembered her youth; the clasp of the supple hand of Lionel's father; the traitor who had cast her adrift with a few careless words. Aphra buried her face in her hands and remained in deep thought.

Lionel was half tormented, half pleased with her presence to-day at the cottage. He was in that state of mental excitement when passion fills the soul to overflowing, and he almost shrank from the company of human beings; dark surmises and fears must be all banished, yet why should Aphra, sitting by his side, seem like some ominous figure pointing to an unhallowed past, and what cause was there for the singular mystery she cast over all connected with that past?

"You seem restless, Lionel," she said, after a slight pause, "do you think the bride may change her mind at the last moment?—such things do happen—or that someone will arise in church to prevent the marriage?"

He smiled as though Lady Constance's sweet face, grave and earnest as he had last seen it, were near to rebuke the bare suspicion of her infidelity.

"I'm afraid, mother, your journeyings about the world have not given you a fair insight into human nature. You don't understand the depth of this girl's heart, her rare unworldliness, and her intense affection. This is in many respects a day of pain for us both, despite our fervour and truth, and if we are both serious, yes, and restless too in thinking of the future, it is only too natural. Can I ever cease to be Lionel Hargrave, of doubtful parentage, poor and obscure?"

"Oh, that he should talk to me thus!" said Aphra, between her teeth. It seemed to her as if he were a prince looking at the crushed

sceptre of the greatness she had wrenched from his grasp.

"You will always be noble, my son—one of Nature's gentlemen," she said, her tears falling.

"Ah! the old jargon; I know it well: 'one of Nature's gentlemen.' Will it give rank, title, riches, to my beloved? Will it prevent the stern Earl of Harrington from turning me from his door with a curse? Will it show me my father's grave, and tell me his name—the name you will never breathe? I like it well—one of Nature's gentlemen!"

How terrible to Aphra to listen to his self-scorn, and his calm contempt of rank and wealth.

"You reproach me for my crime," she cried, seizing his hand.

"You were the victim," he said, briefly; "but on my wedding morn, mother, we will not let past times arise and mingle bitterness with the love-history. I will trust to time, energy, will, to enable me to give her the position that is hers by right. The die is cast. I must leave her to go abroad; it was her wish she should be mine ere we parted."

"I know," said Aphra, nodding her head, "the secret marriage must never be divulged. A woman questioned me once as to your ways and habits, Lionel. She had her suspicions. The lady's-maid, Sophia Meredith."

He started, as though to discard some hateful memory.

"A terrible woman, mother. She followed me from Russia after poor Karl had been shot; he knew her of old. She is a person who would not stick at murder; her very name seems to bring a thick, murky atmosphere into the peaceful cottage. Listen! was that her voice?"

They opened the door, and Sophia Meredith, pale and worn, as if with a sleepless night, entered and offered her hand to Lionel. She nodded pleasantly to Aphra, who watched her intently.

"You are visiting your son, then?" she said, pausing between each word and accenting them as it were.

"He is very dear to me," the gipsy answered, with a sigh.

Was the plot thickening, and could her clear eyes see to the end?

"I have often thought," the lady's-maid went on, cautiously, "what a remarkable likeness exists between Lionel and Sir Hugh Allerton."

Aphra shaded her face with her hand, and then said, coldly:

"They are so nearly the same age and height, you see; many people resemble each other. Look at the Ladies Constance and Violet, you can hardly tell which is which."

"Oh, but then you see they are almost as much alike as twins," Meredith said, meaningly. "But have you never observed the likeness yourself, Lionel?"

"Never. I am a remarkably bad hand at tracing a resemblance among human kind. Now if it were a rose or lily or geranium, speaking professionally, I could give you my honest opinion."

"You heard, I suppose," she went on, eagerly, "that the twin brother died quite suddenly too? It made a great talk at the time at the castle."

Aphra, gliding like a pythoness to the hearth, now approached Meredith and rested her hand on her shoulder. She knew the time was nearing for Lionel to be leaving the cottage to meet Lady Constance, and that this woman must be got rid of. The allusion to the dead baby had brought back all the swift terrors of remorse.

"Did you ever see Sir Phoenix Allerton?" the young man asked, as though he had found a clue to some hidden secret in Aphra's guilty pallor, all the more remarkable from the contrast of Meredith's crimson flush.

"Many times, particularly in Paris. He visited the Count D'Artois. Sir Phoenix was a remarkably handsome man, of a grand massive type, fond of operas, theatres, and races. They said, too, he was a desperate gambler. He had

the gambler's eye. Baocarat was his ruin, and he drank deep."

Aphra, who had loved this man so passionately in her youth, now spoke rapidly, and assuming a lightness of manner wholly foreign to her nature, said:

"Perhaps you know more of him than you care to reveal. He may have flattered you—made love to you. Pardon me. I am only an ignorant gipsy. I don't understand the way they talk in great cities, but by your manner and your blushes I fancy this handsome gambler made some impression on your heart."

Lionel stared; this flippant lightness was so utterly new to Aphra, and so deadly pale was she, he fancied she must swoon. Sophia Meredith started in her turn:

"Are you a fortune-teller like the rest of your tribe? Can you read futurity?"

"Sometimes."

"Then do misery and disgrace threaten the house of Harrington." She placed herself between Lionel and Aphra, and the wicked light in her eyes burnt with fiercer glow; that assumption of superiority she had assumed before them, as beings inferior to herself both in position and knowledge, had faded into something sinister and defiant. "Answer me, Aphra, is this so?"

"I deal with individuals present to me, not with mansions and those who inhabit them."

"Then deal with me, Aphra," holding out her hand; "tell me my fortune."

The gipsy bent over it, regarding it steadily.

"This hand is blood-stained. A human life has been sacrificed for some foul design. You must be alone when I forecast your destiny. Come over to Morecombe Wood, where I am staying, with the rest of our tribe. If I am not there ask for Lion Darratt, he'll know where to find me."

"Very well," said Meredith, pale to the lips; "our young ladies are away, I can well take a holiday. Lady Constance has just driven to Swinford Station. I fancy she's going to pass the day with her cousins at the Duke of Chastelar's Castle, and Lady Violet is at Brighton with the earl."

Lionel shot a rapid glance at Aphra. Meredith's mind was evidently now occupied with the thought of her visit to Morecombe Wood this afternoon. She rose to leave.

"Farewell, Lionel," she said, in an undertone. "Walk with me to the orchard gate, or are you still unforgiving? Don't judge me too harshly, and think the hand I had in Karl's death was prompted by aught save my craving for revenge, if not justice—revenge, that's my creed. He robbed me of you."

Lionel's face was almost haggard.

"You and I are very different beings, Sophia. We move in very different spheres. We can never have anything in common," wearily. "I cannot just now leave my mother to accompany you so far as the orchard gate."

"Not when I love you to madness," she clasped his arm. "A time may come, Lionel, when you may need my help; when you will regret having made me your foe. If I see a labyrinth that is hemming you in, a net-work from which you cannot escape, a lost inheritance, a proud name that you might claim, and which I could restore; when my hair is grey with waiting and with grief, and my heart broken on the wheel of pain, if I should save you will there still be no reward for my great, my cruel, and my unceasing love."

"You speak of a mystery. You always dealt in mysteries when you were not dabbling in crime," he said, bitterly. "No, leave me to my fate. Soon I shall be lost to you and to all—beyond the ocean. I am going to Australia."

"I will follow you!" she cried, almost fiercely. "How can you judge of a woman's love—a woman such as I—older than you, I admit, and for that cause rejected."

The passion of the desert burnt in her evil eyes. He knew the look of old.

"Karl at least defeated you are you slew him. You were his murderer."

"Still hard and merciless! Oh, my stern young judge!" throwing herself at his feet,

"will you still defy me, and make me your enemy? For your own sake say good-bye kindly, and I may yet relent. The tiger leap shall be stayed. You are on the verge of a precipice. Kiss me once, Lionel, as in the old days."

Some unfortunate mood made him reckless. "For pity's sake, Lionel, think once how nearly we were married."

"Thank Heaven, not quite."

"Oh, this is too bitter. You shall repent your derision. You shall weep tears of blood."

"Do you fancy threats will frighten me?"

"You disregarded them once, and now if a nearer and dearer one is in danger—"

"If you harm one hair of her head I will kill you without compunction or remorse as I would a venomous reptile dangerous to all."

"Death from you would be sweet, Lionel. I would kiss the hand that held the dagger pointed to my heart, and still you turn from me. Remember next time we meet all this shall be changed; so farewell; go to your doom!"

He watched her till she was out of sight, and then returned quietly to the cottage.

"Is she to haunt me like some black spot on a fair and sunny landscape? A lost inheritance, would it were possible for my darling's sake. A proud name which may yet be mine. What can she mean? Words, idle words to win me to her side."

Little he guessed at that moment this dark-skinned gipsy was not his mother, and he by right was Sir Lionel Allerton. Aphra met him half way between the cottage and plantation.

"Meredith will come to us this afternoon, Lionel, so there is no fear she will track you; and it is time, my son, for you to depart to meet your bride."

"She spoke, mother, of a lost inheritance, but she is a woman who could rather now defraud me of my birthright than help me to regain it."

"My dear son, this is mere idle trifling. This is your wedding-day; think only of her—your fair young bride—the Lady Constance."

"I do think of her. I cannot bear she should be sacrificed to one inferior—but now the die is cast, and I shall be her husband."

He threw back his head proudly, as though the clasp of his bride's arm thrilled him with new resolve and power."

"On this, your wedding-day, Lionel, I bless you. I pray for your happiness. Your wretched mother can at least do this."

She drew from her breast a small gold flagree anchor with turquoises in the centre. It had been given her by Sir Phoenix Allerton. Aphra, in her ignorant reasoning thought it a suitable offering on a day like this. If Lionel's father had touched this anchor, why not give it to Lionel's bride.

He took it from her gently, and with a few kind-whispered words, bade her adieu, and then once more in the glad sunshine, in the soft autumnal air, Lionel abandoned himself to the rapture of the hour. Expectation made his eyes moist with gladness; when we are happy we wish no harm to any living thing; every person that passed him seemed abject and dejected compared to himself. His bride, in her girlish beauty and innocence, awaited him. He thought of these words of Tennyson:

"In that it is thy marriage-day
Is music more than any song."

The very birds might have known the secret too, so jocund were they, and every flower along his path seemed to breathe a blessing; 'mid all life's ironies it is well sometime to lay aside suspicion and doubt, and take happiness to our hearts, not as a shadowy spirit that will evade our grasp, but as something strong and true, like perfect human love and faith; he felt the solemnity of the moment too, and that the fate of one of the fairest daughters of Eve would soon be in his keeping. But in the midst of his happy reveries he noticed the shadow of a man who seemed to be stealthily following him from behind the hedge as if anxious not to lose sight of him.

"Surely I know that face," he muttered;

"what can he want here? It is the famous French detective—Raoul."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOTH FLIES TO THE LAMP.

Led they not forth in rapture
A beauteous maiden there,
Replendent as the morning sun,
Beaming with golden hair.

"LIONEL! my own."

He saw her in her soft grey robes, standing beneath an aged oak, and a wild, passionate impulse of devotion and triumph surged in every vein. Lady Constance trembled visibly, her fair face was paler than marble, and yet at times suffused with crimson-tinted flushes that rose like waves.

Lionel had all the supple grace of early manhood in every limb, the dark, waving hair clustered in rings over his sunny temples. He was a handsomer man than his father, Sir Phoenix Allerton, had ever been, and when the gravity of his expression broke into smiles he seemed to woo with invisible caresses. Love's spark enkindled from above lifted them into purest light, and made the world a dream, and the real life divine commence within their own hearts.

"Have you waited long?" he asked, striving to master his agitation. "My mother, Aphra, came to give me her blessing, and that singular woman, Sophia Meredith, also looked in. Any undue haste on my part might have aroused her suspicions."

Lady Constance clutched his arm eagerly. That name seemed like the approach of an evil visitant, or as if some viledye had been dropped into a crystal stream, discolouring and befouling it; but this was not the time to ask any explanations regarding Lionel's past, in which this woman was implicated.

"See what I've brought you from my mother," he said, gently, and taking the small gold flagree anchor from his breast. "It is, alas, the only gift I can offer you. You will marry a poor man, my Constance."

Lady Constance took it from him with evident pleasure.

"I shall ever value it, Lionel," she said, kindly, not perceiving the faint initials carved under one of its leaves. "And will you accept this from me?" offering him a diamond ring, "as a token of my affection?"

"Since it is your wish, my own," the colour deepening on his brow, "I will accept it, and prize it as your gift on our wedding-day, and now it is time for us to be going towards the church."

And still the figure that had crept along by the hedge-rows approached nearer and nearer. Alas! no fair train of bridesmaids awaited the bride; no proud and loving father was here to give her to her adoring husband's keeping, no tender mother wept tears of joy and sorrow that the most important event in her child's life had come. But Lady Constance forgot all this in the tumult of passion which stirred her mind. Cold and haughty Violet, who had often stung her with contempt, and the trite indifference of the earl, could never rob her of the enjoyment of this hour. Lionel, who had saved her life, was now by her side, soon to be made her husband, with a husband's right to cherish and protect her. The aged pew-opener courtesied gravely as Lady Constance walked down the aisle, and soon after the solemn service proceeded.

"If either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony ye may now confess it."

As these words were read Lionel perceived Raoul's cat-like eyes intently watching, and a half smile broke over his mouth. This influence affected Lionel so strangely; it seemed so prophetic of sorrow and separation following the marriage, that in his nervousness the wedding-ring slipped through his fingers and rolled under the chancel; it caused a slight confusion in the service, and Raoul, leaving the pew, entered one of the side seats nearer the altar and an open door.

At the vision of this man, who had arisen to

bring back as it were the ghastly memory of Karl Cevanoski's death, Lionel recognised the work of Sophia Meredith.

Lady Constance had nerved herself for the occasion; her voice did not tremble in the responses, but when the service had ended, and they entered the vestry, she noticed that the opal ring seemed dull and mistier than before.

"My wife, my darling," cried Lionel, as he drew her head on his breast and rained kisses on her lips, when they were seated in the hired brougham which was to convey them to a distant village, where miles from Lady Constance's proud home the simple wedding breakfast had been prepared, "I've been thinking," he said, lifting the little anchor that she had attached to her chain, "that the mystery somewhat deepens concerning my birth. You know, dearest, I can never more divest my mind from the idea that I'm the rightful heir to some name or property I've been robbed of unjustly, and for your own sake more than my own I long to find out the truth."

"I am contented with you as you are, Lionel," she said, meekly; "perhaps I am different from most women, for I never seem to care for wealth and pomp; the future, it is true, looks dark for me when I think you must leave me, but this is our wedding day, and let us forget all but that."

What do we call these strange infatuations which affect the mind with marvellous force? This girl who had seen the rounds of various fashionable London seasons, and ridden in the Row with other élegantes, witnessed dangerous flirting, and enjoyed her share of excitement, parties, fêtes, and admiration, still clung to love with beautiful truth; they were wedded—made one in the sight of Heaven.

"Your father no doubt expected you would make a grand marriage," he said, thoughtfully.

"I should never have been fitted for the part they wished me to play in the world. Believe me a cottage home would suit me far better than a palace; wealth never charmed me. People don't understand me, I'm not clever or witty. I dislike grand dresses and show, they can never satisfy the heart. Weak-minded, they used to call me once, Lionel; they said I was disposed to melancholy; perhaps great sorrow would drive me mad."

"Oh, hush! my darling! you are if anything only too sweet and angelic for this life. Our souls were drawn towards each other from the first."

"Yes, Lionel, when you are with me all seems changed; before I knew you I thought my greatest happiness must consist in trying to help the poor and suffering; my conscience ruled me then, when suddenly a new influence came, a sweet spell visited me. I was no longer a dreaming girl, but a woman, changed by the magic of your voice and smile." Her face was very beautiful as his arms encircled her slight form, and his burning gaze met hers.

"I should like to take you away with me for ever," he whispered, passionately, "you seem to me like wine and ether. You intoxicate while you soothe," passing his hand along the rippling shower of golden-brown tresses that now fell to her waist.

Her eyes moistened, and she trembled. She half swooned in his embrace, and yet even in her rapture a vague terror assailed her senses. This nervous sensibility was surely a fatal gift; hers was essentially the clinging nature easily crushed by cruelty and wrong.

His breast heaved in responsive ardour. He strained her to his heart as if he too foresaw some approaching calamity threatening them even in their deepest joy. Not the fondest kisses could avert this dread, nor the most impassioned love-words banish its haunting oppression.

(To be Continued.)

POVERTY is the only burden which grows heavier by being shared by those we love.

FUNERAL REFORM.

SHEFFIELD has followed the example of one or two other provincial towns, and formed a Funeral and Mourning Reform Association, the object of which is, if not to dispense with mourning altogether, to prune its extravagances, and enable people of limited means to show respect for the dead without involving themselves in crushing expenses. The ostentatious pageantry which marks an ordinary funeral is repulsive to most sober-minded people. The dismal array of hearse and coaches, nodding plumes, scarves, crape trimmings, and all the other furnishings so dear to the undertaker, mean for poor people a long period of debt and hardship. Death in a family is often nearly as much dreaded because of the expense in which it must involve the bereaved as because of the sundering of life-long ties. Associations to reform funeral customs are needed, but what is needed more is the resolute conduct of men and women who have the courage of their convictions, and who, when the occasion comes, will not fail to set at naught an extravagant and senseless custom.

OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

Over and over again,
No matter which way I turn,
I always find in the Book of Life,
Some lessons I have to learn.
I must take my turn at the mill,
I must grind out the golden grain,
I must work at my task with a resolute will
Over and over again.

We cannot measure the need
Of even the tiniest flower,
Nor check the flow of golden sands
That run through a single hour.
But the morning dews must fall,
And the sun and the summer rain
Must do their part, and perform it all
Over and over again.

Over and over again,
The brook through the meadow flows,
And over and over again
The ponderous mill-wheel goes.
Once doing will not suffice,
Though doing be not in vain;
And a blessing, falling once or twice,
May come, if we try again.

The path that has once been trod
Is never so rough to the feet;
And the lesson we once have learned
Is never so hard to repeat.
Though sorrowful tears may fall,
And the heart to its depths be riven
With storm and tempest, we need them all
To render us meet for heaven. W. C.

THE forest flora of British Burmah, recently published by the government of India, asserts that an evergreen tropical forest, consisting of two hundred to three hundred species of trees to the square mile, is almost the rule in that province. About two thousand species of woody plants are described in the work.

THE habits and distribution of the dreaded tsetse fly of Eastern Africa have long been the subject of careful investigation by Dr. Kirk, the well-known British Consul at Zanzibar. His latest report shows that no antidote or efficient means of protection has yet been discovered; but recent observations indicate that the fly haunts distinctly defined regions, the boundary of which, when known, may be closely approached with entire safety. It has often been asserted that the tsetse follows large game in their migrations, but Dr. Kirk does not think this is the case.



[UNDER SUSPICION.]

ALICE DESMOND'S TROTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DARK CLOUDS.

Long fitful moans, and tears all icy cold,
Enough, if not too much of sorrow told.

ALICE MORTON sat in her own sitting-room, pale, wearied, heavy-eyed; pity, deep pity, for the life cut short she felt, and yet a sweet consciousness that she was free. Fancy had been with her all the morning. For the first time there was perfect confidence between them. No secret now severed them; they were still in eager conversation when a message came that Lord Bolton would be glad to speak to Lady Alice.

"What can your papa want, Fancy?" cried the girl, petulantly; "I am so tired. Why can't he let me be?"

"I do not understand it at all," replied Miss Bolton. "Papa and Edwin have been busy all the morning. Neither of them came to luncheon, and I heard mamma tell the Duke of Burnham they were with a London detective."

"Everyone seems full of trouble," said Alice, shivering, in spite of the summer sunshine.

"This is changing everything," returned Fancy. "Everyone is going to-day except the duke; to-morrow the Castle will be empty. People never care to stay where there has been a death."

"And such a death?"

"Won't you go to papa, dear; he must want

to see you, really, or he never would have sent for you like this."

"Come with me, Fancy."

But Miss Bolton excused herself. She knew her father well, and felt sure he needed Alice for no trifle.

Mr. Grimes had heard often of Lady Alice Morton; he knew she was esteemed one of the most beautiful women in London, and he anxiously awaited her coming. He saw a pale, delicate-looking girl, whose face was wan and tear-stained, yet who walked with a firm, proud step, and carried her head erect as though she had nothing to fear.

Lord Bolton came forward and took his ward's hand.

"My dear Alice," he said, affectionately, "I am very sorry to trouble you, but Mr. Grimes insists on speaking to you, and I thought you would prefer that I should be present."

"Who is Mr. Grimes?" she asked, quickly, not seeing the detective, who had purposely withdrawn to a corner.

"A very skilful police officer, whom we have summoned to assist us in this sad case. You must answer his questions, my dear. Even I cannot save you from them."

"Is he here?"

Mr. Grimes stepped forward then. The girl's brown eyes were turned on his face.

"What do you want to ask me?" she cried, impetuously. "Do you suspect me of murdering William Gordon?"

"Certainly not, my lady; we never suspect anyone without proof."

"You had better put your questions promptly," urged Lord Bolton; "Lady Alice Morton has been indisposed the last day or two, and she is not strong enough for a long discussion."

The detective bowed to Lord Bolton, and then turned again to Lady Alice. One hand shaded her face. The cheeks which had been so wan were crimson now. Her breath came and went quickly. Even Lord Bolton perceived her agitation.

"I think you knew Mr. Gordon?" began Mr. Grimes.

"Certainly; I know all Lord Bolton's guests."

"Did you know him before he came to the castle?"

"Yes; I met him in London."

Her words were calm and clear. Mr. Grimes felt puzzled; he remembered the note found near the scene of the tragedy. He placed it before her.

"My lady, did you write this?"

Never by word or sign did she attempt to deny it.

"I wrote it," she said, in a voice so hopeless and sad, Lord Bolton absolutely started; "it was given by me to Mr. Gordon with my own hand; had he been a gentleman he would have destroyed it. He haunted me and blighted my life alive, and now he strikes me from the grave. What have I done that my fate should be so wretched? Kill me too; I should like to die; I can't drag out my days—now you must know all."

"Alice!" cried Lord Bolton, frantically, "are you mad? My dear child, have you any idea how wildly you are talking?"

"Let me tell you all," she said, imploringly;

"let me tell you my trouble from the first. I owe it to you for your kindness to me. You won't judge my father's child too harshly. Oh, yes, I have been mad. I was mad not to trust you, but I am sane now."

She came and knelt at his feet, her beautiful head buried on his knee.

"Don't," she said, plaintively, when he would have raised her, "I am best here. I could not say what I must say with your eyes looking on my face."

Lord Bolton's eyes were not dry, there was something so utterly hopeless in the girl's voice that he dreaded to hear her confession.

"We are not alone," he whispered.

"I know it; it doesn't matter, they must all know soon."

So she knelt on in her glorious beauty, the

sun shining down on her bowed head, and turning her hair into threads of gold, and she poured forth her whole story from the first meeting in Ashton Wood to the appointment for the preceding night. She kept back nothing; all was told, and in spite of the agony of shame which accompanied the telling, Alice Morton felt easier than she had done for months.

Lord Bolton raised her when she had done speaking, and placed her upon a chair. Her strength had given way then, and she was weeping bitterly. The old lord stroked her hair tenderly, as though she had been a child, and spoke words of comfort as gently as a woman.

"Don't" meant the girl, sadly, "you ought never to speak another word to me. Think how I have deceived you. You must never let Fancy or Meg come near me again. I will go away somewhere and hide myself, and pray that you may all be as happy as you tried to make me."

"Alice," replied her guardian, gravely, "you exaggerate your fault, poor child. You have been more sinned against than sinning. A little courage and I could have freed you from this scoundrel. I must call him so, though he is dead. I might have spared you all this misery if you had only trusted me. As it is—"

"It is too late."

"It is too late to save you from William Gordon's persecutions, because death has already saved you from them, and I fear the story you took such pains to hide from us must now be published to the world, but not too late to prove our love to you. My dear, your father left his child to us, and we must not desert her at the first breath of adversity. Our home must be yours still, Alice, and all our efforts must be to save you from the reproach of strangers. Go upstairs now, you have been tried enough. Fancy will stay with you."

Alice seized his hand and pressed it to her lips, moved by the compassionate tenderness of his speech and most of all by his last words, "Fancy will stay with you."

When she had left them the peer and detective remained for five minutes silent; then Lord Bolton said, brokenly:

"Poor girl, she has suffered horribly!"

"She has more to suffer yet," said the other, firmly, but not unpitifully; "young, beautiful as she is, we shall have all our work cut out to save her from the prisoner's dock."

"Great heaven! Surely you do not suspect her still?"

"Lord Bolton," cried Mr. Grimes, earnestly, "I am an honest man, and I know an innocent woman when I see one. Lady Alice told us both the simple truth. We know it, and are convinced, but circumstances are fearfully against her. Every jot of evidence points to her as the murderess. Captain Bolton found her at the victim's side, his blood dyeing her dress. Allowing her innocent, where is the real culprit?"

"Some other woman," replied Lord Bolton: "from the first you believed it to be a woman."

"Ay, but how prove two women were connected with Gordon's life, two women who lived at Bolton Castle; besides, this poor girl's story will turn against herself; by her own showing she had the strongest motive to hate this man."

"He behaved like a blackguard."

"Granted; only our law doesn't allow even blackguards to be murdered."

"What do you propose to do next?"

"I don't know, my lord, I am fairly baffled; until I heard Lady Alice, I felt certain the writer of the note was the murderess, and now I believe she was innocent."

"How are we to convince others of it?"

"Lord Bolton, there is but one way, to find the real murderess, otherwise, no human power can save your ward; it is the clearest case of circumstantial evidence I ever saw."

"The coroner's jury are to view the body to-morrow."

"We must raise legal quibbles, and prolong the inquest as long as possible. We must spend money like water and search far and wide. At

present I see but one aim, to delay the verdict of the inquest as long as possible."

"And why?"

"Because, my lord, as matters now stand, that verdict will infallibly be one of wilful murder against the Lady Alice Morton!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A PRISONER.

Where when the gods would be cruel
Do they go for a torture? Where
Plant thorns, set pain as a jewel?

THERE was consternation at Fulton, Elcheater and throughout the county for miles, when the result of the coroner's inquest on the body of William Gordon was known. The jury had returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against Alice Desmond Morton.

It had been a slow and tedious affair for three long weeks. The inquest had been prolonged chiefly by the skilful management of Mr. Detective Grimes. Days before all had guessed what the end would be, Alice Morton's name was in every mouth, her portrait figured in the papers, tales of her youth and beauty, her wealth and rank, circulated freely. Those who had admired and envied her before, now judged her cruelly in their own homes. Public opinion was against her. The young painter had been popular; his tragic fate threw a halo round him, and in all the world people told each other none but the heiress could desire his death.

A man who kills his betrothed through exacting, jealous love, meets pity, but the world has none for the girl who shoots the man she is tired of; her very youth and beauty tell against her.

So it was with our hapless heroine. Those who loved her best were true to her. Mr. Marston lived at the castle in those days. Lord Bolton told his ward over and over again nothing would or could shake his faith in her. Fancy and Lady Bolton gave her the tenderest care and kindness, and Meg told his Grace of Burnham she should hate him always if he said a word against Alice. The duke replied he had no thought of so doing; he respected and pitied Lady Alice as one suffering unjustly.

Then it came—the terrible night when they knew the worst; when the fiat had gone forth and the law's stern arms demanded that the person of Alice Morton should be delivered to them until such time as she should be proved innocent of the crime of which she stood accused.

Detective Grimes and Mr. Marston brought the news first to Lord Bolton and his son. Half-an-hour later the police were at the castle. Clearly no time must be lost in acquainting Alice with her fate.

"I cannot do it," cried Lord Bolton; "how am I to go to that innocent girl and tell her twelve of the greatest idiots Heaven ever created, declare she murdered a scoundrel simply because he happens to have injured her?"

"Where is she, mother?" asked Captain Bolton from his white lips.

"Upstairs with Fancy; I think she expects this; it will be no surprise to her. She said to me this morning that her unhappy secret had forced her into such strange conduct, that those who did not know her might well believe her to be guilty."

"We do know her," breathed Edwin. "Father, let me go to her; I brought her here, I saw her first; let me go?" and the peer and his wife both shrinking from the sad task, consented.

Edwin went softly upstairs. In the awful trouble which hung over the castle, he could not have trod with his usual step. He went straight to the morning room—the room where she came first a stranger one little year before. He never forgot the sight which met him. Alice Morton, pale and calm as some lovely statue, sat on a low chair; Fancy bent over her with tearful eyes. Outwardly, Miss Bolton was far the more affected of the two friends.

"Alice," said Edwin, hoarsely, quite forgetting all form of speech, "Alice, they have sent me to tell you—"

He broke down there; looking at her he could not finish.

"That they think I murdered William Gordon?" said the girl, in her clear, low voice. "Captain Bolton, I am not surprised. I fancied sorrow was coming to me. I have suffered bitterly for a moment's error. I have lost my own self-esteem and the respect of others. Let them take my life too."

"Alice," said Edwin, wildly, "Alice, you must not, shall not, talk like this. No one could think harm of you, because when you were a child a villain entrapped you into an engagement. You never can lose any respect that is worth having."

"You are very kind," she said, sadly. "It is good of you to pity me, but you can't alter things; nothing can blot out the past."

"Then you don't care what I think?"

Fancy had slipped from the room, her frame shaking with sobs.

"Not care. Why when you avoided me I thought of nothing else. All day long I wondered how I had offended you."

"Alice, I saw you with Gordon in the park. I thought you loved him."

"Let me go, Captain Bolton," she said, feebly. "You did not finish your errand; you did not say they had come to take me away, but Fancy's tears told me so."

"They shall not take you, Alice; I will never let you go."

"I must go," she replied, bravely; "my innocence will be clear some day; it may be too late to save me, but at least you will know your trust was not in vain. Oh," she added, taking his hand in her two slender ones, "don't think me ungrateful for that trust. I bless you for it. All your family have been kind to me, but you were the first I saw, and oh, it is very sweet to me to know you have faith in me."

"Faith in you," he repeated, in agony. "Alice, do you know if I lose you I lose all I value in life. For weeks I have known this, but I thought it hopeless. I believed you loved another. Alice, we have not time for many words; tell me, my darling, can you love me, will you take my worthless, aimless life, and let me spend it by your side?"

"I cannot," moaned the girl, in her anguish. "Oh, I cannot; don't you see what a thing I am, what this will make me? I may be a convicted criminal; they may kill me by an awful death, at best the shadow will remain."

"Innocence such as yours must proclaim itself. Alice, promise me to be my wife."

"Your wife should be pure and spotless. No breath of scandal should tarnish your name, and mine, alas, is a byword of reproach. My judges condemn me unheard."

"I will save you. You asked me once if I never did anything, if I had no object, but the petty aims which seemed to occupy me; here is an object, and a noble one, to save my promised wife from a doom as awful as unmerited; trust me, Alice, those who scorn you now shall eagerly protest your innocence."

She shook her head sadly. "I thank you; I bless you, but it will be in vain. The truth will be discovered too late."

An instant's silence; he knew time was flying. He could not for the life of him remind her of what awaited her; she was braver.

"Captain Bolton, will you tell them I am ready? I should like to say good-bye to your father. Give my dear love to your mother and Fancy, tell Meg not to delay her wedding for my sake. Go, please, I can't bear any more. I have much to go through yet, and I must be brave."

The upturned face was full of sublime courage. Edwin hesitated; he longed to press his lips to hers; that for once such sweet contact might exist for its memory to cheer him in the future. The temptation was great. Edwin withstood it, he did not kiss the averted lips, and he did well. Alice loved him, trusted him, but now she was at perfect ease with him. His presence caused her no emotion; once their lips had met

such could never more have been the case. He pressed her hard to his mouth tenderly; he looked into her face with eyes of love, her own drooped beneath that gaze. He needed no other answer; the very fact that her sweet eyes dared not meet his told him she loved him.

Half an hour later she was leaving the castle. It was a sad scene. Lady Bolton and her daughters hid their grief in secret, but Lord Bolton was there, with as fatherly care as he had ever shown her; he led Lady Alice down the long hall, with his own hand he placed her in the waiting fly. One policeman seated himself opposite her, another mounted the box. Edwin Bolton's eyes were not dry as he witnessed that sad departure, the slight, black-robed figure so dignified in its sorrow had never seemed to him so beautiful.

The whole family realised how they had loved her now she was gone. Fancy went about sadder than ever the separation from Mr. Grey had made her. Meg could hardly smile at his grace himself, and Lady Bolton never checked her daughters' sorrow. The peer himself seemed querulous, and Edwin from the moment of Alice's departure lived a life apart. He spent much of his time at Elchester, never missed one of the tedious examinations before the magistrates, and had long, earnest consultations with Mr. Marston and detective Grimes; that his love was innocent he never doubted, but his heart bled as September faded into October, and no fresh evidence was forthcoming. The last adjournment of the magistrates had been fixed, there was little doubt their verdict would be that of the coroner's jury, and Alice Morton in very truth committed to take her trial for murder.

(To be Continued.)

THE FREEING OF THE THAMES BRIDGES.

Two of the toll bridges over the Thames—Waterloo and Charing Cross—have been formally declared open "free for ever" by a deputation of members of the Metropolitan Board of Works, in accordance with the provisions of the Metropolitan Toll Bridges Act of last year. Mr. Dresser Rogers, who headed the deputation in the absence of Sir Jas. Hogg, took a leading position in the ceremony, and after receiving the key from the chairman of the Bridge Committee, in the case of Waterloo Bridge, and from Mr. Beattie in the case of Charing Cross, delivered brief addresses to those who had assembled to witness the opening, in the course of which he detailed the action of the Metropolitan Board in freeing bridges.

The bridges next to be freed from toll will be Lambeth, Vauxhall, Chelsea, the Albert Suspension, and Battersea, and it is hoped that before Christmas they will be thrown open to the public. No day can, as yet, be named for their opening, for compensating interests on a very large scale have to be dealt with, and settlement must necessarily occupy several weeks. The freeing of Wandsworth, Putney, and Hammersmith bridges will follow.

THE FRENCH VINTAGE.

The "Economiste Française" says that the vintage has commenced throughout the whole of France, and that in some places it is already finished. The bad weather which prevailed during the greater part of August seemed likely to have a very prejudicial effect upon the quantity and quality of the yield, but the fine days which continued throughout September appear to have rectified matters, at all events as far as the quality is concerned. Such is the case in the Bordeaux district, in the Charente, the Dordogne, the Lot-et-Garonne, the Eastern Pyrenees, the Gard, and the Hérault.

In the Beaujolais, and in Upper and Lower Burgundy the yield will vary more than in the

above districts; but as a rule, the high-class vineyards will be below the average. In the plains and the slopes which do not receive the maximum of sunshine, the oidium has done much mischief. In the champagne districts the whole of the vine has been sold before the termination of the vintage, and some of the best brands, such as the Ay, Bouzy, Crémant, Avize, &c., have been sold as they stand at the rate of £32 per cask of 44 gallons. It is estimated that the total yield will be about 900,000,000 gallons, which is below the average for the last ten years, but the quality will be good. There has been a slight rise of prices at Bordeaux, and in most other centres of the wine trade.

THE SURVIVORS;

OR,

John Grindem's Nephew.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER what we have seen of Grindem's views and surroundings, it cannot be thought surprising that he was astir early on the morning in question.

He had, in fact, a great deal to do.

He wanted to find out just who and what was Captain Tobias, and how and why the old navigator happened to be in possession of the island at that particular moment.

In the second place, the villain wanted to know who was Mr. Albert Graham, and what ill wind had blown him to a spot where he was so little wanted.

And finally John Grindem wanted to know if the said Graham were really his rival already for the hand of the charming Helen Prescott.

The unhappy rascal had not been able to sleep more than a few minutes at a time, so deeply were these various anxious questions borne in upon him.

He was astir early, therefore, as we have stated, and very firm was his resolution that not many days should pass without seeing his affairs upon a more satisfactory footing.

At the first step he took he became conscious that the three sailors were also awake. They either said something to one another, or asked him some question.

"I was never so tired in my life," declared Shutter, yawning.

"I can say as much," declared Weedon. "I'm as weak as a kitten!"

Crossley was even more emphatic in his declarations of exhaustion.

"The truth is," commented Grindem, after listening to several remarks of this nature, "you have all had a terrible experience during the last few weeks—and especially during the past few days—and you must have a day or two of perfect rest. I think you might all three be handled in your present condition by a smart boy of sixteen. You will have to recruit your strength before I shall be able to turn you to account. Fortunately you have a good roof over your heads, and are not likely to want for provisions. I want you all to stay just where you are until this time to-morrow."

"That's all very pleasant for us, no doubt, Mr. Grindem," said Shutter, with another yawn, "but how will you amuse yourself during the day?"

"Simply in taking the best of care of you, and in getting acquainted with the island," declared Grindem. "I must first assure myself that the two men I have mentioned are not going to leave the island, taking the girl with them, or in any other way putting up a job on me. Make yourselves comfortable until I return, when I will serve you a nice breakfast."

Proceeding towards the old navigator's cabin, Grindem had encountered that worthy with his two young friends, and had secretly followed the trio to the cavern, where his presence had

been betrayed by an unfortunate stumble, as related.

The recognition was mutual, and for a moment reigned a sense of general consternation.

The old navigator was the first to recover his self-possession.

Holding his torch high above his head, to throw his own face into shadow, while he illuminated the features of the intruder, he asked, quietly:

"I suppose you are looking for us, Mr. Grindem?"

"Well—yes, sir," answered Grindem, endeavouring to control his emotions. "I went to your cabin and found you absent. Looking for you in this direction, I saw you enter the ravine upon which the cave opens. In the act of descending the rocks to join you I slipped, on account of the rain, and caught a fall which left me unconscious nearly an hour."

"Indeed!" returned the old navigator, a little sarcastically. "You don't know what a treat you have missed by that hour of unconsciousness. Really, remembering your cocoanuts, I must say that you are unconscious a great deal too much lately! I am surprised that you were able to find the entrance of the cave without assistance!"

"I suppose it was more by good luck than by any cunning of my own," said Grindem, who had now nearly recovered the equanimity he had lost at the detection of his presence. "Be that as it may, here I am, sir!"

"You come just in time to be useful, Mr. Grindem," said Captain Tobias. "I want your assistance."

"Of course, I am at your service," assured the intruder, now himself again.

Helen and Albert modelled their attitude after that of the old navigator.

"What I want of you is to assist us in transferring this treasure to my cabin," pursued Captain Tobias, as he flashed his torch over the shining coins. "You and Mr. Graham will just about be able to carry it."

"Ah, I thought I heard something said about treasure as I entered the cave," exclaimed Grindem, with a well-imitated tone and mien of surprise. "Why, what a lot of it. All gold and silver, as I live. Doubloons and suns, dollars and guineas, with bars of gold and silver. These must be relics of the buccaners."

"Yes, that's the origin of the hoard," said the old navigator. "The whole now belongs to me by right of discovery. And since you have dropped in upon us so unexpectedly," he added, with such a quiet air that Grindem thought him unsuspecting, "you can do no less than help us remove the treasure to a place of safe keeping."

Grindem signified his assent, with a visible greed and preoccupation that did not escape the notice of his companions.

It is not needless to say that the young people not only comprehended the conduct of their benefactor; in the instant removal of the treasure, but they also approved of it. From the moment when Grindem had once become aware of its existence, it was absolutely essential to place it beyond his reach. Albert even smiled at the ready promptness of Captain Tobias in making the villain an instrument of its removal.

"What is there to carry the money away in?" asked Grindem, looking around.

"I will show you," replied Tobias. "Just off this rocky apartment is another, which was evidently the store-house of the ancient occupants of the island. At any rate, there are plenty of boxes and kegs there as sound as they were when brought here."

A selection was soon made from the kegs in question—which had in all probability once contained water—and the money was gathered into them, and in due course conveyed to the old navigator's cottage.

"You may leave the treasure here in the corner for the present," said Tobias, who had led the way into the principal apartment. "I will attend to it later. Many thanks, Mr. Grindem."

"You are welcome, sir," said Grindem, wiping his damp brow. "I would advise you to bury the cash, Captain Tobias, in some secret place until you have a chance to leave the island with it."

"Curious. That's my very intention," returned Tobias, continuing to look and act as if entirely unresponsive.

"Can I be of any further help to you in the matter?"

"Not at present, thank you."

"Then I may as well go back to my own quarters."

"Did you want anything in particular that you came down here so early?" asked the old navigator.

"No, sir. I only wanted to see that you were all well, safe, and unmolested," said Grindem. "I am still so weak from my cocoa-nuts that I propose to pass the entire day in sleep, or at least abed, but I will look in upon you again early to-morrow, and we will talk up our future."

Captain Tobias answered in an indifferent little nod, and Grindem uttered his adieux and took his departure. Captain Tobias watched him out of sight, and then turned smilingly to the young couple.

"When a man is determined to be wicked or miserable, children," he said, "it is singular how the very universe conspires to help him on. Now, our friend Grindem was sour enough yesterday, but to-day he is wolfish. The sight of this money has filled him with covetousness, and hence has increased by one the loads of misery he is carrying."

"I see, too, that he misses the society of Miss Prescott more than he can tell," said Albert, with a laugh.

"And is more jealous of you than he has power to conceal, boy," retorted the old navigator, putting his hands upon our hero's shoulders and looking him full in the face. "In a word, Mr. Grindem thinks that we are getting on altogether too well without him!"

"Doubtless he means to give us his sweet company some fine night after twelve o'clock," said Helen. "Meanwhile, what on earth can we do with that money?"

"Mr. Graham and I will bury it immediately," replied Captain Tobias. "You will please watch against the return of Mr. Grindem, Miss Prescott, so that he will not surprise us in this labour."

The money was soon buried, and Albert, at the old navigator's request, took Helen to the spot, that she, too, might remember its precise location.

"This money is to be equally divided between you, children," declared Captain Tobias, when they returned to the cabin, "if we ever have a chance to turn it to account. I shall never have any use for it whatever."

"Don't say that, dear Captain Tobias," said Helen, venturing to put her arm around the old captain's neck. "You are not an old man, by any means, and how do you know what bright days Heaven may have in store for you? Your last days may be your best days, in accordance with the old proverb. We won't refuse the interest you offer us in the money, Captain Tobias, but I am sure Mr. Graham and I will use that money to make you comfortable and happy, if we ever have the disposal of it."

"That is so, Captain Tobias," confirmed our hero, emphatically. "Miss Prescott has stated my views exactly. You yourself, sir, shall have the good of that money, if we can ever get away with it."

"I see that I am in a hopeless minority," said the old captain, as he caressed the young couple, and wiped his eyes with suspicious energy. "The essential in the case is that we have the use of the treasure and that Grindem does not see a shilling of it. And now for the business of the day, children. You will remain here, Miss Prescott, and keep house for me. You will also remain here, Mr. Graham, and maintain a constant guard over Miss Prescott. And as to Captain Tobias, he is going to make a thorough examination of the whaleboat in which you came

here, Mr. Graham, and see if it is not fit to take us to the coast of Guatemala!"

The young couple started excitedly, bestowing keen glances of inquiry upon their benefactor.

"Yes, I mean just what I say, children," he resumed. "The day may soon come when we shall have to leave this island in a hurry. If those three sailors, for instance, who belonged to the 'Messenger,' as you were telling me, should arrive here in due course, and join themselves unto Grindem, what sort of a show would we have for taking care of ourselves, seeing that I am an old cripple?"

"The arrival of those men would indeed be a great misfortune for us," said our heroine, thoughtfully. "They were well acquainted with Grindem, even to the extent of knowing his real name, and this fact is in itself enough to show that they had been drawn intimately together. Like attracts like, you know!"

"In any case, we are as likely to be early informed of a hostile arrival as Grindem possibly can be," declared Albert, with the same thoughtful air which had characterised Helen. "Another thing, I will pay a quiet visit to Grindem's hut, or to the neighbourhood, just before dark, and see if he has been favoured with the arrival of auxiliaries."

"A good idea," commented Captain Tobias. "Only you must take good care not to be waylaid in going or coming!"

"We are certainly entitled to look after him, since he has been playing spy and sneak," declared Helen. "But I agree with Captain Tobias, Mr. Graham, that you must be very careful and watchful and not allow him to take you at a disadvantage."

Twice during the day, when there was a brief suspension in the falling of the rain, Albert and Helen ascended to one of the most elevated hills, glass in hand, to see if a sail was within sight, but no sign of any was seen. These walks were not taken without an exchange of thoughts that tended to draw their souls very rapidly together. It was indeed for both very natural to love!

"What a sad experience for Captain Tobias these twenty years of waiting and watching," murmured Helen, as they were on their way back from the second of these trips. "How often he must have gone up to those hills to look for the ship that never came!"

"Yes; and how terrible must have been his disappointments," returned Albert. "I wonder that he has preserved through them all such a fund of hope and patience."

"But, after all, is not every human being, wherever placed, always watching and waiting for ships which never come?" murmured Helen. "It seems to be the will of Heaven, as far as this world is concerned, that our longings are not satisfied, and that our hopes remain unanswered. This is, at least, my experience."

"And mine too, Miss Prescott," returned Albert, with deep feeling. "But may there not be a glorious significance in that thirst with which we thirst, and that hunger with which we hunger? Will not the fruitions of the world to come be all the brighter by reason of these earthly disappointments and denials?"

"They will, undoubtedly," declared Helen.

"Then why should we mourn? As dark as has been my lot, Miss Prescott, I have still had my compensations. I know that my lost ones are not given over to suffering and annihilation, but that they have been gathered within the everlasting holy of holies, where they await my coming."

"Oh! that is so, Mr. Graham," murmured Helen, her eyes filling with tears. "My poor father—my parents are there!"

"And mine also. What, then, are all the darkensses of life in comparison with its glories and grandeur? What all the horrors of hate in comparison with the raptures of love? And what all the hideousness of crime in comparison with the beauty of goodness? All the sorrows I have ever known, Miss Prescott," and he faced about in the lonely path, coming to a halt and looking into her eyes, while he seized her hands, "are as nothing in comparison with the

joy of looking into your sweet eyes this moment, and of being told by every thought and sense that you return the love and devotion I bear you. My own little darling," and he enfolded the radiant and happy girl in his arms, embracing her tenderly. "I love you! I love you! Will you be mine?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE rain was pouring in torrents before the young couple reached the cabin of the old navigator, but they walked on, arm in arm, as slowly as if the clearest of summer skies was above them. Indeed, so visible in their every look and action was their great happiness, that Captain Tobias, chancing to look from one of his windows, as they approached, could not help seeing that something unusual had happened.

"The thing is turning out just as I expected," he said to himself, rubbing his hands joyfully together and flushing with delight. "There they are—with their heads in one bonnet. But how could it be otherwise? They were not only created for each other, but they have been thrown together here under such circumstances that an hour of acquaintance counts for a year of chance meetings in the ordinary walks of existence."

The couple soon came in, arousing as if from a dream. The "rain-shedders" with which they had been supplied were literally dripping. Their faces were as bright as the fire Captain Tobias had provided for their reception.

"We have been gone longer than we intended, Captain Tobias," Helen hastened to say, apologetically. "I hope you haven't been alarmed about us."

"The truth is, the rain held up more than an hour," observed Albert, "and the day was so much finer than at first promised, that we took a sort of circular route in going and coming."

The old captain turned his gaze from one sunny face to the other, raising his finger in playful threatening.

"Oh, I know very well what you have been about," he said, smilingly. "I daresay you haven't once thought of me or of Grindem since you left me."

"Oh, yes we have, sir," assured our heroine—"not of Grindem, perhaps; why should we? but of you, Captain Tobias, we have been thinking and talking almost constantly."

"And what have you been thinking and saying about me, if I may be so bold as to inquire?"

"We have been deciding and arranging that you are always—always to live with us, and have the best room in the house, Captain Tobias."

"Oho! that's your little game, is it?" roared the delighted old navigator, as he took each of them by the chin. "I am to live with you, am I? And who are you to live with, if you please?"

"Why—don't you see?—it's all settled!" stammered Helen, becoming as rosy as possible. "Albert loves me, and I love him, and we both love you, Captain Tobias, and it's all settled, between Albert and me that you are always to have a home with us, if we can only make our escape from this terrible island."

The mood of Captain Tobias changed from gay to grave on the instant. His broad chest heaved with emotion.

"I congratulate you both, children," he said, feelingly, "upon the pleasant understanding which has been brought about between you in the course of your walk. It seemed to me, the moment I saw you together, that you were destined for each other. You can imagine therefore how happy I am to know that the future I so promptly assigned you is not a vain imagination, but a bright and joyous reality. I am sure you will accept my best wishes and heartiest blessing!"

An hour passed as quickly as delightfully, during which the trio had supper, and then Albert rose and armed himself, with a serious expression of countenance.

"I am going to take a stroll as far as Grindem's hut, Captain Tobias," he announced, "and will leave Helen to your care in my absence. To be on the safe side, you had better bar the door as soon as I am gone, and not admit anyone, until you know who is demanding admittance."

"Your wishes shall be our law, Albert," declared Captain Tobias.

The arms of our heroine stole gently about the neck of her lover. He could hear the quickened beating of her heart.

"You will be very careful, dearest?" she whispered. "You will be on your guard against Grindem while with him, and against being waylaid after you leave him?"

"Of course, darling," assured Albert, caressing his betrothed. "I think I comprehend that man too well to fall a victim to his wickedness or cunning."

It was still raining hard when Albert set out upon his errand. The day was drawing to a close, and it was the intention of our hero to arrive at the hut of Grindem just at nightfall, so that he could survey the scene by both sight and hearing without betraying his presence, if it should seem desirable to him to take any particular precautions.

He had nearly reached the lone hut when he heard sounds of an axe chopping wood, and a moment thereafter he was absolutely startled by hearing Grindem say, as the blows were temporarily suspended:

"Don't do that, Weedin! In fact, I don't want you to show yourself at all until I tell you. Better stay within doors. I can bring all the wood and water that is wanted."

"All right, sir," was the answer.

As brief as was this response, it was quite sufficient to tell Albert that Grindem was no longer alone. His pulses quickened at the thought. The mere fact was a menace, and possibly a peril.

Pressing his steps, he reached a point of observation that enabled him to command a view of the clearing around the hut in time to see the figure of Weedin as that worthy vanished.

Halting behind a dense group of bushes Albert watched and listened.

Grindem had resumed chopping and was swinging the axe fiercely. Evidently he was completing the preparation of his fuel for the night.

"I see," mused our hero. "Weedin is one of those three sailors. If one of them has reached the island, why not all of them?"

The mere thought gave him a thrill of uneasiness.

"Still, if they have all arrived here safely," he reflected further, "there would be four of them to assail us. In that case, why have they not already made an attack upon us? Why this wariness and delay? For what are they waiting?"

Here was, of course, a puzzle.

The actual fact in the case—namely, that Grindem was waiting to allow his allies to recover a portion of their wonted strength, did not just then occur to our hero.

The task Grindem had set himself was soon completed, and then he filled a keg with water at the adjacent brook, and entered the hut, closing the door behind him.

Albert realised already that his visit was likely to prove of the most vital importance. The necessity of finding out all about the occupants of the hut was, of course, patent. The watcher passed carefully in review all the features of his surroundings.

As has been taken as a matter of course, a small clearing has been made immediately around the hut, not merely for the sake of air and light, but to afford ready material for the construction of the dwelling.

This circular space could not be crossed by our hero until night had fallen, and then only at considerable risk of detection; but Albert determined not to retreat until he had discovered the number of Grindem's allies.

He accordingly waited until the evening had

fully set in, and a profound mantle of mist and gloom had descended upon the island.

Then he cautiously left his concealment, gliding to the cover of a pile of brush which had been left at one corner of the dwelling, and which really afforded as good a hiding-place as could have been provided.

The sound of voices, with the rattle of tin dishes and frequent bursts of laughter, had been for some minutes ringing out upon the air, and Albert comprehended that the occupants of the hut were several in number, and that they were making merry over their supper.

From the point of observation he had now reached he could not only look into one of the several small openings which had been left in the sides of the hut to serve as windows, but he could also overhear through this opening every sound louder than a whisper.

"Here's to our friend Graham," the voice of Grindem was heard saying. "By about this hour to-morrow evening we will give him the greatest surprise he has ever experienced!"

"You don't suppose he knows anything of our presence here, do you?" asked Shutter, in a voice which attested that he had been drinking deeply.

"Of course not," answered Grindem. "If he'd come here before night, we should have been prepared to see him, as I had all three of you stowed away under the floor, so that he wouldn't have seen the least trace of your presence. And as to his coming here after dark, that is out of the question. He would break his neck in going or coming."

"Besides, he is more interested in courting the girl than he is in looking after you, Mr. Grindem," suggested Crossley. "That the couple are already over head and ears in love with each other, may be taken for granted. Given certain premises, it is easy to foresee certain conclusions?"

"That's so!" declared Shutter, bringing his hand down heavily upon the rude table that occupied the centre of the cottage. "For instance, I never see a bottle of whiskey at my elbow without foreseeing that in about thirty minutes I shall be as drunk as a fiddler."

A loud laugh followed this sally. Albert crept nearer. Several great points had already come to his knowledge.

In the first place, it was evidently the purpose of Grindem not to enter upon hostilities until the following evening, and it now occurred to our hero that the object of this delay was to afford the unscrupulous plotter a chance to cultivate the good graces of his allies.

The second important discovery of Albert was, that the friends of Grindem were three in number, and that consequently there were four of the rascals to deal with.

"I take it, boys, that we have all had an excellent supper, considering the circumstances," said Grindem, as he arose from the table.

"Excellent," confirmed Weedin.

"I never fared better," declared Crossley.

"Especially if we include the whiskey," said Shutter. "That is one of the most precious things you saved from the wreck of the brig, Mr. Grindem."

"I was sure you would prize it, if only for its rarity," said Grindem. "And now that we are all peaceful within, suppose we discuss the work before us in all its details. The first point is, of course, to take the old hermit and Mr. Graham prisoners, binding them hand and foot?"

"Yes, we understand that," exclaimed Shutter, looking around with maudlin gravity upon his companions.

"The second point is for me to seize the girl," pursued Grindem. "If I can arrive at an understanding with her by fair means, well and good; if I cannot, I'll shut her up in this hut in the closest sort of captivity until I break her haughty spirit. And the third point is, to find out from the old hermit where he has hidden that famous treasure, and take possession of it."

"You see it's not a long job, boys," said

Weedin. "In the course of to-morrow night it shall be completed!"

"If you are strong enough to warrant me in going to war," said Grindem. "How do you feel to-night, Crossley?"

"Well, not so fierce as I might, sir, but I still think I could make a very good fight."

The two other sailors expressed themselves in similar terms.

"I am not quite certain in regard to you," said Grindem, thoughtfully, as he surveyed the lank figures and emaciated features of his allies. "I think it's possible that you will have to remain quiet for a week before you will be fit for a scrimmage. The truth is, you lost all your flesh on the wreck, and are little more than skeletons."

"We are doubtless stronger than we look," assured Shutter.

"It is easy to settle the question as to your strength," said Grindem. "I think I can handle all three of you. Suppose we try it, just for exercise?"

"Three to one?" ejaculated Weedin. "What fun it will be?"

"It's settled, then?" cried Grindem, arising. "I'll produce those cords we have laid away for Master Graham, and I will see if I cannot take all three of you prisoners, despite all you can do to prevent me."

The prospect was entirely of a nature to please the three men, and they lost no time in preparing for the struggle.

"Of course if I can handle you," said Grindem, "you are hardly fit to make war upon the enemy. But, on the other hand, if you are able to capture me, why, we'll make things hot for Master Graham and the old hermit to-morrow night, you may be certain."

"All right, sir. That's a very good way to put it," commented Shutter. "Are you all ready, Mr. Grindem?"

"Yes, all ready."

"Then here's at you."

(To be Continued.)

THE LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.—The report of this company for the half year ending June 30 states that the net proceeds of the working in that period were £1,392,033, and that the balance from last account was £27,577, making £1,422,610 as the disposable balance.

SCIENCE.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

FOLLOWING up the successful use of the electric light in Paris and elsewhere, the London Stereoscopic Company have caused powerful machinery to be erected at their Regent Street premises for the production of this new lighting agency, and claim to be first in applying it to purely commercial purposes. A considerable number of persons assembled one evening recently, to witness the illumination of the lower end of Regent Street by means of a lamp in connection with the apparatus, and as usual the soft but powerful rays of the electric light caused the ordinary street lamps to look dim and yellow, as though seen through a fog, by force of contrast. This lamp, besides illuminating the street, is made to throw its light upon the window of the company's premises, and thus it can readily be seen by a glance at the coloured photographs there displayed that the new light is no destroyer of even the most delicate colours.

The apparatus, which is constructed according to Messrs. Siemens' plan, consists of an electric coil, worked by an eight-horse power gas engine, and emitting a constant succession of tiny sparks. The coil communicates with a burner in the ground glass lamp outside, and produces a light equal in brilliancy to about 4,000 candles. This is the smallest illuminating power that can be produced with a due regard to economy with any known system of the kind. It is this fact that renders the electric light unsuited in the present stage of its development

to any but a large scale of operations. An illuminating power of such magnitude necessarily involves a large outlay, and it is in this matter of expense that the value of the electric light as a substitute for coal gas will probably be ultimately decided, but the advocates of the present system are confident that the advantage in this respect will be found on the side of the new agency.

The object which the Stereoscopic Company has had in view, however, in fitting up the apparatus at their establishment has been, not so much the lighting up of the exterior of their premises, as the taking of photographs upon dull or foggy days. With three burners of an aggregate illuminating power of 16,000 candles it is stated that a light is produced more powerful for the purposes of photography than that of the sun, and that photographs have been successfully taken by this means. The absence of the overheating qualities of coal-gas from the new light is much insisted on.

THE committee of the British Association appointed to consider the advisability and estimate the expense of constructing Mr. Babbage's analytical machine (perhaps the most marvellous instrument for arithmetical computation ever designed), made their report at the Dublin meeting. In their opinion, the engine, in the present state of the design, is not more than a theoretical possibility, though they do not doubt the utility of such a machine as the inventor contemplated. After the necessary details were worked out, if indeed, they can be worked out at all, the cost of the engine would be expressed in tens of thousands of pounds; and, under all the circumstances, the committee declined to advise its construction.

ALTHOUGH not characterised by any remarkable novelty, the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science this year, at Dublin, is described as having been a successful one in every respect. The most noteworthy addresses were made by Dr. Spottiswoode, the president, Mr. Romanes, who spoke on animal intelligence, Professor Huxley, who opened the business of the department of anthropology, and Professor Dewar, who delivered a lecture on modern ideas of chemical action, illustrated by elaborate and novel experiments which are spoken of as magnificent. We have previously noticed the president's address. Professor Huxley reviewed the recent progress of anthropology, and said that his memory went back to the time when anybody who broached the notion of the existence of fossil man would have been simply laughed at. But now it was beyond all question that intelligent man existed at times when the whole physical conformation of the country was different from what it is at present. He believed the celebrated Neanderthal skull to belong to the lowest form of human being of which we have any knowledge, and saw no reason for doubting that the men who lived in the time to which it belonged were in all essentials similar to men of the present day.

THE conjecture of Sir George Airy that the supposed intra-Mercurial planet observed by Professor Watson of Ann Arbor during the recent eclipse might be the star Theta Cancri, seems disposed of by the account of his discovery which Professor Watson has communicated to the American Journal of Science and Arts. From this it appears that he distinctly saw Theta Cancri at the same time with the supposed planet. Thus he says: "Between the sun and Theta Cancri and south of the middle of the field, I came across a star, estimated at the time to be of the four and a half magnitude, which shone with a ruddy light, and certainly had a larger disc than the spurious disc of a star." And in another place: "The appearance of the object arrested my attention even before I moved the telescope to the known star farther to the eastward. It was very much larger than this star, which was Theta Cancri, and its light was quite red. The appearance of the disc was such as to lead me to believe that it was situated beyond the sun."

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XL.

GEORGE GARLAND'S REQUEST.

A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.
LONGFELLOW.

KATIE was still trembling with excitement when after her sleepless night and early morning walk she got back to the pretty cottage which was now her home.

How it was she could not tell, but she felt like a poor little fly encompassed with the cunningly spun webs of many spiders, and though she was not the victim of any of her enemies as yet, it seemed as though turn whichever way she would she could not escape them.

Her landlady looked up in surprise when she saw her enter the house, for she herself had but just risen and was quite incapable of appreciating the charm of an early walk while the dew was on the grass, before the earth was properly warmed, and more practical still, when her fast had not been broken.

The girl made an observation as to what she had been doing, then sought her bedroom to hide her burning cheeks, take off her walking attire and attempt to calm her tumultuous and angry thoughts.

"How dare he?" she thought, her eyes blazing with indignation; "what can I ever have said or done that should make him presume to insult me like this. A married man to come and offer to leave his wife and child to run away with me. The very thought is degrading to me. I thought of his wife when he spoke; I forgot how cruelly wicked it was of him to make such a proposal to me. Oh! what can I do—what shall I do—to drive the memory of it from my mind. I feel as though some vile thing had touched and tainted me."

And the poor girl knelt by the bed and writhed in mental shame and agony, feeling, though it was not the case, that Fretwell must have thought lightly of her, or he would never have ventured to address her as he had done.

She made no allowance for the man's natural vanity, for his wife's incessant taunts and insane jealousy; she put it all down to something wrong in herself, and never in her life had she felt so weak and helpless and humiliated.

A tap at the door told her that breakfast was ready, and she tried to rouse herself, for she knew that curious eyes were upon her, and that to look as she really felt was a luxury which it was imperative she should deny herself.

Despite her walk she had no appetite, and she played with her food rather than ate it, and when at last the meal was over, the things taken away, and she had watered her flowers and arranged her books and papers, she sat down, pen in hand, and tried to write. Pen, ink and paper were there, but she might as well have tried to fly by tying on a couple of large wings to her shoulders, as to write this morning, for not an idea would come.

She thought of poor Teddy Dale mistaken for a time for Basil Rosburn, and now lying as she believed ill unto death, for the news that he had been murdered had not yet reached her. Then her thoughts wandered to Percy Rosburn, and she sighed painfully. What would he think if he knew of the insult that had been offered her this morning? Couldn't she imagine the curl of contempt on his scornful lips!

A shiver of pain went through her at the thought. And then the remembrance of Lottie's words came back again. What evil could Mrs. Fretwell be meditating against her? She had never wilfully done her the slightest injury, how then could she have incurred her enmity?

The knowledge that the Garlands were going away too helped to sadden and pain her, and thus absorbed her hands fell listlessly upon her lap; she had not even her old companion the fire to look into, the weather being too warm for one, and she was beginning to think seriously of going back for a few weeks to Great Barmouth, when a knock at the front door and the mention of her own name roused her, and she rose with more cordiality than she might otherwise have shown, to receive George Garland.

"Good-morning," she said, extending her hand; "are you alone?"

"Yes, whom did you expect with me?" was his natural question.

"I thought your sister Minnie would have walked over with you; she half promised to come to-day."

"Then probably she will. I didn't tell her I was coming. What, not one, Katie?"

And he tried to kiss her.

"Certainly not!" And she drew back with dignity, while her cheek flushed.

After the experience of this morning she was not minded to abate one iota of the deference she considered her due.

"You're awfully cool to a fellow, Katie, particularly when I've told everybody that I'm going to marry you."

"You should not have done anything of the kind. I particularly told you I wouldn't bind myself by any promise to you, and between ourselves, I don't think I shall ever marry at all. So don't let us talk any more about it; at present at least."

"That's all very well. I came over here on purpose to talk about it; our folks are all going to Germany. Amy has taken some fad in her head, and she won't let us ask you unless you are positively engaged to me; she's jealous of you, that's the long and short of the matter."

"Jealous of me! And in connection with whom?" asked the girl, her eyes flashing.

"Percy Rosburn," was the prompt reply.

"Ridiculous!" And she half turned away to hide the glow of love and hope upon her face.

"I'm glad to hear you say that," pursued the young man, "for I felt rather savage at your going off with him and uncle and Minnie last night, and I not invited."

"Going off with him!" repeated the girl with some impatience. "It was no pleasure party. I went with Minnie to your uncle's chambers to identify a man; after that we were all hungry, and we had some dinner. You are perfectly ridiculous, Mr. Garland. How are you getting on with your studies?"

"Oh, very well, but it's awfully dull work; but about this trip to Germany; will you go with us?"

"No, thank you."

"Because of the conditions?" And the young man's face fell.

"Partly," was the reply; "but even without that I should not care to be an unwelcome addition to your mother's party, and that, by your own confession, if I went I should be."

"It's only Amy who is jealous of you, and she is nobody."

"She is your eldest sister, and the journey is to be made at her suggestion and desire. No, thank you, Mr. Garland; I'll gang my ain gate, if you please."

"It's very unkind of you," he retorted, hotly; "it's only because you won't put an end to my uncertainty, and give up the privilege of tormenting me."

"I don't want to torment you," with a frank smile, while she opened wide her blue eyes with surprise; "but as I have told you before, you don't know your own mind, and perhaps I don't know mine either for that matter."

"Then you won't go with us?"

"No, thank you."

"Not if I make believe we're engaged and don't tie you down with a promise, or expect any demonstration of affection from you or any concession whatever?"

"No; I will make no bargains for my love or for my society," was the reply, with a smile;

"when I give either I do so freely and without any arrière pensée. I hope you will all have as the Americans say, 'a good time' of it, and I will write to Minnie while you are away, so she can tell you what I am doing if you have any interest in my movements."

"If" with an angry toss of the head; "won't you write to me?"

"Of course not. I shall be busy. I am thinking of going home to Barmouth for a few weeks. The sands and the sea, the yaws and the trawlers will be old familiar sights; you don't know what it is to have lived by the sea all your life, and then to go quite away from it."

"No, I don't, but if you won't go to the Continent with us I'll stay at home too."

"That would be absurd; you would spoil the pleasure of your mother and sisters and see nothing of me, for as I tell you, I don't think I shall be here. Ah! Who is that?"

For the knocker had sounded, and a few seconds later Minnie Garland, bright and fresh in her morning dress, and after her brisk walk, came into the room.

"Good-morning, dear! You here, George? Have you been successful? Is it settled? Are you coming with us, Katie?"

"No; I think of going to Great Barmouth."

"Ah!" in a tone of disappointment; "not to stay; not for good, I hope?"

"Oh, no, but sit down; you look flushed."

"Yes; that reminds me; something dreadful has happened; uncle was telegraphed for to go to his chambers early this morning, and he sent a letter to mamma by a messenger, saying he could not go with her to her lawyer's as he had promised. The poor young man you went to see yesterday is dead; he has been murdered."

"Murdered!" repeated Katie, in horror and dismay. "Why, he was ill—dying, who could have wanted to kill him?"

"I don't know. Uncle's message has shocked us all; he himself seems in a dreadful state of agitation."

"So I should imagine! Poor Teddy Dale."

"Well, I suppose I must be off," said George Garland, suffering from a sense of defeat.

"You don't start for the Continent for a few days, do you?" asked Katie, scarcely knowing what to say, and glad he was going.

"No, not till next week," was the reply. Then turning to his sister, George Garland said:

"Try to persuade her, Min, I've failed," and with a hurried adieu, the young man left the house.

"Poor George!" sighed his sister.

"You needn't pity him," returned Katie, with a smile; "he is in love with his love, not with me. I dare venture anything upon it; and if I am mistaken, I don't suppose it would go very hard with him; but to do as he wishes, and allow him now to enter into an engagement to marry, would be a far greater wrong to him than to me. He will lose his heart to some German mädchen, and if he doesn't, I may attach more value to his assertions when he returns than I now do."

"Well, of course, you know best," replied Minnie, with a sigh; "but I should like you for a sister."

Katie bent and gave her a kiss, and George Garland's sister felt, though no words were spoken, that there was a half promise for his hopes in the action. When Katie spoke again it was to say:

"You are in no hurry, are you? I can't work to-day, and I should be so glad of your company."

"Yes, I will stay, or go for a walk with you; if I get back in time for dinner I shall do very well."

So it was arranged. But before the girls parted, the news of another tragedy reached them; nearer and more terrible to one of the two than the death of poor Teddy Dale had been, for Katie wondered wildly—desperately—whether she had in any way been the cause of it.

CHAPTER XII.

TERROR STRICKEN, yet scarcely knowing what she was afraid of, Lottie stood at the foot of the stairs with the front door wide open so that she could escape if she chose, and called out in a terrified tone:

"Is anything the matter, ma'am?"

No answer. She repeated the inquiry.

Still the same silence, broken only by the moaning of the wind, and then the girl, grown desperate with fright, rushed out into the road, and seeing at a little distance a policeman, she ran to him, caught hold of his arm and gasped:

"Come! come! I don't know what has happened. I'm afraid she's killed herself and the baby—the poor baby!"

The man looked at her in astonishment. At first he thought she was mad or tipsy, but as she still tried to drag him in the direction from whence she had come, he said gruffly:

"All right, don't tear my coat. Where am I wanted?"

"Here!" And Lottie entered the small house and pointing to the upper rooms said:

"There's something awful up there. I don't know what it is, but there's blood dripping down through the ceiling, and Mrs. Fretwell was like a madwoman when I saw her an hour ago."

The man's cheek slightly paled; he had a constitutional repulsion to anything sanguinary or horrible, and as he began to mount the stairs he said to Lottie:

"You'd better come with me."

Very reluctantly she complied, following close upon the policeman's heels.

Reaching the small though pretty bedroom the girl's fears were confirmed; for there on the floor lying in her own blood was the poor woman whose violence and jealousy had driven everyone from her.

She was quite dead. A razor that she held in her hand was the weapon with which she had taken her own life, and Lottie, when her eyes rested on this horrible sight, sank down, white with terror, moaning: "I knew it—I knew it."

Suddenly she remembered the baby, and looked about wildly for it. Not far had she to seek. There it was upon the bed, so calm, so still; not a cry escaped it. No cry will ever pass through those parted lips again, and the absence of any mark of violence upon the infant, and that strong smell of almonds that comes from its mouth, tell but too surely the manner of its death.

"Come out of the room," said the policeman, glad to get away from the repulsive sight after he had convinced himself that life in both mother and child was extinct; then he locked the bedroom door, putting the key in his pocket, and asked Lottie if she could run to the police-station?

The girl shook her head; she was almost speechless with terror and grief, but she pointed to a boy who was loitering outside, as one who would do his bidding; then ran across the yard to her own house. Her white face startled the old woman, who asked, anxiously:

"What's happened? What's the matter?"

"Just what I told you she would do; and we might have stopped it perhaps if you'd done as I begged you, Sue. Oh, I'll never forget the sight! Never! And the poor baby dead! and to think we might have saved him!"

"Don't say that," exclaimed the old woman, half wild with selfish fright, yet not understanding the full extent of the tragedy, "don't say that; you'll get us into trouble maybe, both of us. And how was I to know she wouldn't tell me to go and mind my own business?"

"Well, Sue, she'll never say that again," was the reply, in a tone of utter despondency. "You ought to have gone over with me when I begged you to go. If I had been there alone I couldn't have done much to save her, but together we might have kept her from being so mad and so wicked. I wish I knew where the master was to be found. 'Twill be an awful shock to him, poor fellow, when he hears it."

"You don't think he did it, Lottie, do you?" hissed the old creature, with a wicked, cunning gleam in her eyes.

"Did it?" repeated the girl, flashing up. "What, killed them?" she went on. "No; no more than you did, and not as much. You might have helped to save them, but he was driven away."

"I know you was always fond of Mr. Fretwell, Lottie," said the old creature, in a wheedling and yet half threatening tone, as she watched the girl's face greedily.

But she was not rewarded for her random shot, for Lottie replied, calmly:

"Yes, I liked both of them in a way, but 'twas the baby I was most fond of. Poor little Freddy, I shall never nurse and kiss him again."

"But how did she do it? Is she quite gone?" questioned the old woman, curiously.

"Go and see," was the reply, and Lottie was leaving the room, when Sue remembered the blame which might be cast upon her, and she began to entreat:

"Don't say you asked me to go over with you, Miss Lottie; 'twon't do no good now, whatever it might have done before, and I'm an old woman, and 'twill upset me dreadful to go before the coroner; and," she added, with malice, "I might make a mistake and say nasty things about 'handsome Fred' as I've heard you girls call the poor thing's husband."

Lottie felt the stab, though she gave no visible sign of it, and she said, quite calmly:

"You'll speak the truth, I suppose, Sue; so shall I."

And as the old woman was beginning to urge her point again, she replied, sharply:

"I believe I told the policeman that you wouldn't go with me; and I shall answer truly every question I'm asked. I'm going up to my room a bit. If anybody wants me you'll know where I am."

So saying she ascended the stairs and left her. Sue was an intensely selfish old woman. She could be spiteful on occasions, but selfishness and love of ease were her two most striking characteristics, and she knew very well that her comfort and perquisites would be greatly interfered with if her refusal to go over to Mrs. Fretwell's when Lottie believed her to be in a dangerous condition, were to become known.

Remorse for having refused, she had none, even though the consequences had been so fatal, but she felt that in some way or other she must silence Lottie; then, curiosity to see what had really occurred overcame all other considerations, and she shuffled across the yard to satisfy it.

And meanwhile, Lottie sat in her room debating a momentous question. What should she do with the sealed packet which the dead woman had written, and that no living creature besides herself knew of?

"I'm sure it would be the best and kindest thing to both the living and the dead to burn the letter unopened," mused the girl, "but dare I? shall I be punished for it if it is found out, and shall I be right in acting on my own judgment in a matter that isn't really my own business?"

So pondered the girl, taking furtive glances at the ominous packet which professed to contain the reason why that poor mad creature had hurried, unbidden, with her child's death upon her soul, into the presence of her Maker.

"I daren't destroy it," said Lottie, at last, with a gasp, as she returned it to her pocket; "I daren't. I'd do a good deal to spare Katie Jessop any pain or disgrace when too I know she doesn't deserve it. But I can't do this. If he comes back I'll give it to him, and he must please himself what he does with it. I'll say nothing about it till I'm obliged."

Later in the day, as I have said, a letter arrived addressed to Lottie, from Mr. Fretwell, and asking her to give the one enclosed from his lawyer to his wife.

Mrs. Chater arrived on the spot at this moment, for the news of the tragedy had spread with marvellous rapidity, and Lottie showed her the letter she had just received.

"That is fortunate," said that energetic woman; "he wants some clothes sent; he shall have a telegram instead. He must be on the



[MORE TROUBLE FOR KATIE.]

spot; people are beginning to speak suspiciously about his absence."

Then she sent off her telegram, asked numberless questions; talked to the police; made herself very fussy and sometimes useful; but would not consent to enter the house where the tragedy had taken place, or look upon the faces of the victims.

Instead of that she drove over to see Katie Jessop, and tell her how fortunate it was she had left the school before this sad affair occurred.

"She was mad, I am convinced, quite mad, my dears, and that is the verdict the jury will bring in, you may depend upon it," she said, as soon as Katie and Minnie, who was still with her friend, had recovered from the first shock of horror and amazement on hearing the awful news. "But I must return," she went on; "I have telegraphed for Mr. Fretwell, who was away when this occurred, and I should like to see him or know if he is coming. Can I drive you back with me, Minnie, I see you have your bonnet on?"

"Yes, thank you, I shall be glad if you will," was the reply.

Thus the friends parted, and during the whole of the drive Mrs. Chater tried by every kind of cross-question she could devise, to ascertain if Katie Jessop and Frederick Fretwell had met once, twice, or oftener since the former had left the school.

Fortunately Minnie knew nothing about the Fretwells; she had never heard Katie mention the man's name; she did not know that his conduct and his wife's violent jealousy had been the cause of Katie giving up teaching as a profession, and taking to literature, and had she been told this, she would not have believed it. Consequently Mrs. Chater, when she put Minnie down at the door of the Willows, was no wiser on the subject than when she had offered her a seat in the carriage.

One person at the Willows that evening was greatly affected at hearing of Mrs. Fretwell's death, even though he did not show it much at

the time, and this was Colonel Chartres. No man knew better than he how suspicion, when once breathed over a woman's fair fame, will taint it evermore, be she as innocent as the angels themselves, and he trembled lest this poor insane creature in a moment of mad jealousy had thus taken her own life to make the shaft more deadly which she had prepared to be launched at her supposed rival.

So anxious was he, that poor Teddy Dale's death, which in the morning had so shocked him, almost passed out of his mind now, and he lay awake half the night trying to decide upon what was best to be done.

He was very angry with Amy Garland; but for her petty jealousy Katie would have been a welcome and delighted guest among them, and could the colonel have found a suitable chaperone the chances are that the party would have been split into two, and Amy and her mother would have found themselves alone.

But this could not be managed. Colonel Chartres had no female relative living save his half-sister and her daughters, and he did not care to ask any intimate friend who had a wife to help him to get up such a party as he would like. So this time the woman's obstinacy prevailed, and Amy Garland completely thwarted her uncle. Some triumphs however are more costly than defeat, and so this young lady found in the long run.

"Katie must go home to Great Barmouth while we are away," at length decided the old man; "it will be a change, and it will be safe, which is the principal thing. I will telegraph to her aunt in the morning, and I must go over and see the child, I feel responsible for her. Poor girl, I wish Percy would marry her. I should have a home with them then. But it won't be. He is too proud and ambitious, and I am giving up all hope of finding my son."

With which he fell asleep. The next morning while Katie was trying with but slight success to eat her breakfast, Colonel Chartres arrived.

"Oh, I knew you would come," she said,

springing to her feet; then with a sob, she cried. "Isn't it awful?"

The colonel made her a sign; his quick ear had noticed that the landlady who ushered him in had not retreated from the other side of the door, and was undoubtedly listening.

"Yes, it is," he replied; "poor fellow, he looked so calm and gentle as he lay there on my bed, but for your recognition of him I should have felt that my quest was over, and that I had only found my son to lose him."

"Oh, he wasn't a bit like Basil, sir; there wasn't the slightest resemblance—but—have you had your breakfast?"

"Yes, some time ago; if you have finished, we will go for a stroll."

A mute assent was given, the door was opened sharply, and old Sue's daughter was caught before she could get away or frame an excuse.

"You can take away the breakfast things," the girl said, as she passed her; and a few seconds later Katie was ready, and the two started for a walk together.

"Now, my child, I know what you were going to talk about," said the colonel, "but you can't be too careful. When did you last see the husband of that unfortunate woman? Since you left the school?"

"Yes," and then Katie, with a hot face, repeated the scene which had taken place the previous morning, even to Lottie's expressions of good will.

The colonel's face became graver while he listened, and when the girl ceased speaking, there was silence between them. At last he said uneasily:

"I must see this girl Lottie. Ah! what is the matter?" for Katie was shrinking to his side as though for protection.

"Don't you see, sir, he is there. That man? it is Mr. Fretwell."

"Ah! stay where you are, I will come back to you."

A minute afterwards the two men stood face to face.

(To be Continued.)



[UNPLEASANT NEWS.]

"MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sinned Against: Not Sinning," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

*Chaste as ice, pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.*

SHAKESPEARE.

"Why should not Clement Woodleigh accompany us to the Continent?" thinks the Countess of Brakeholme, as she sits down to dinner opposite her husband.

The solemn butler and footman move noiselessly about; and as long as they are in the room the countess does not broach the subject that is uppermost in her mind. Her husband asks after her health, and is concerned about her appetite; for she carefully keeps up the farce of being an invalid.

"I should like to go cruising in the yacht," she says, as they sit alone after dinner, "but I presume it could not be gotten ready at such short notice."

"My dear Geraldine!" exclaims the good-natured earl, "why did you not mention it before? If you would not mind waiting for a day or two, I shall at once telegraph to Cowes and tell them to get the 'Sylph' ready at once."

"You are very kind," she replies, amiably. "Yes, I should like it very much. I feel sure the sea air would do me good."

"Then that is decided," says his lordship. "Davis," to a footman who has just entered the room, "have a telegram sent to the yacht at Cowes, ordering it to be ready by Friday for the reception of her ladyship and myself."

"By-the-way," says the countess, "I have

not seen this picture of Isola. I should like to see it before we leave London."

"Do you think you are equal to the exertion?" he asks, apprehensively.

"Oh, quite," she replies, "and that reminds me that I had a note this evening from Mr. Woodleigh with reference to that miniature of your mother which you wish to have copied." And as she speaks the countess hands Clement Woodleigh's note to her husband.

"Geraldine," he exclaims, with some animation lighting up his kindly face, "I like this young man; do you think he would care to come in the yacht with us?"

"I am sure I don't know," she replies. "You had better ask him."

"Have you any objection to my doing so?"

"Not the least." And her heart beats high with expectancy at the thought of how readily her amiable husband has fallen in with her wishes.

"He is a gentleman," pursues the earl, "and he may help to relieve the monotony of being on sea with only your husband to keep you company," he says, with a little smile.

"I meet with no better company than that of my husband," she returns, intent upon making herself as agreeable as possible, "nor with any man more courteous."

"Long may you continue in that blissful frame of mind," he says, laughingly, and in high good humour at her delicate little bit of flattery, "and now, Geraldine, shall I really go to-morrow and invite Woodleigh to accompany us?"

"I think it would be very pleasant to have him; he is a most charming companion."

"Is there anyone else you would wish me to ask also?" he inquires.

"Oh, no, no one else, I think. We three shall be quite a pleasant congenial little party amongst ourselves."

And thus it comes to pass that the Earl of Brakeholme calls the next day at Clement Woodleigh's studio, and there proposes to him

that he should accompany them in their cruise in the yacht.

"The countess tells me that you want to go somewhere near Marseilles."

"Yes; a small seaport a few miles one side of it," he replies, "I want to call and look up a friend I have reason to believe is staying there."

"What is the name of the place?" asks the earl.

"Nivernay," is the reply.

"I do not know that I have ever heard of it, but no doubt we shall be able to make it out."

When the Earl of Brakeholme takes his leave, Clement Woodleigh lights a cigar, and ponders upon the curious coincidence of his going on the search for Isola Marbourne in her own father's yacht. He also wonders if it can be possible that the countess is on the search for the Lady Isola also, and if so, why does she wish him to accompany them?

He has just reached this stage of his reflections when the door of his studio is opened, and his friend, Ernest Maybrick, enters unceremoniously.

"Well, old man," he says, as he helps himself to one of Clement Woodleigh's cigars, "I haven't seen you since the show opened in Piccadilly; allow me to congratulate you upon the success of your picture."

"Thank you, Maybrick, I only wish you had been equally successful."

"I wish I had been, I am sure," returns Maybrick, cheerfully, as he blows a cloud of smoke around him. "Well, better luck next time."

"You take the matter very philosophically," says Clement Woodleigh.

"No use in doing anything else," he responds, "but, I say, Woodleigh, is it true that you sold your picture on the opening day, and got one thousand pounds for it?"

"Quite true."

"Lucky dog: well, some people are born to good luck."

"It was quite an accident my getting the

money," replies Clement Woodleigh. "The picture was bought by the Earl of Brakeholme."

"So I have heard," says Maybrick, drily, and in such a tone as to cause Clement Woodleigh to look up at him inquiringly.

"Oh! so that matter has got wind!" he exclaims, quickly, and with a slightly heightened colour; "what gossips there are in the world!"

"I quite agree with you," replies his friend, in the same odd, dry tone.

"What the mischief is it to anyone who buys my picture?" he says, somewhat testily.

"My dear boy," returns Ernest Maybrick, "don't you know that the world generally occupies itself about things that it has the least right to feel curious about?"

"I say, Maybrick, what are you driving at?"

"Well, I may as well tell you, old friend," he replies, in a slightly embarrassed tone. "The fact is, it has got wind all about your having rescued the Lady Isola Marbourne."

Here Ernest Maybrick suddenly stops short, and seems to concentrate all his faculties upon re-lighting his cigar.

"What the mischief is that to anyone?"

"Oh, nothing, of course!" and again Ernest Maybrick speaks in a slightly embarrassed and ambiguous tone.

"I say, Maybrick!" exclaims Clement Woodleigh, rather seriously, "there is something you have heard that you want to say, and don't like to do so. I give you my word I shall not be in the least offended at whatever you may say."

"Right, old boy," says his friend, slightly encouraged by this remark; "but you know it is always a very thankless office to tell anyone of any injurious report."

"What injurious report can you have heard?" Clement Woodleigh asks, wonderingly.

"Why, simply that people connect your name with that of the Lady Isola, and are inclined to speak slightly of her fair fame."

Clement Woodleigh's handsome dark face flushes angrily, and a lurid light flashes forth from his dark and ordinarily gentle eyes.

"What!" he exclaims, hotly, as he springs to his feet; "cannot the world even let her escape! The gentlest, purest, most innocent of her sex! Scandalous! shameful!" and he walks angrily up and down the studio.

"Quietly, quietly, my dear boy," says Ernest Maybrick. "I expected you to say as much. But you know what the world is as well as I do."

"But, Maybrick, you knew the whole truth about the Lady Isola Marbourne. I told you all. You should have contradicted such vile reports."

"So I did, old boy. So I did; but it was of no use. Tell me, were you not at the Countess of Brakeholme's the other night?"

"I was. Why?"

"Did not the Countess faint whilst you were there?" he inquires, ignoring Clement Woodleigh's last question.

"Yes. What of that?" and Clement Woodleigh speaks almost sternly.

"Because report says that the Countess of Brakeholme is so very much attached to her step-daughter, the Lady Isola Marbourne, that the sight of you, whom report further states, she hates, had such an effect upon her that she fainted."

"I always said report was a liar!" exclaims Clement Woodleigh, with a sarcastic smile; "but I never before had so good, or so well authenticated a proof of it."

"It is not true, I presume, in any particular?"

"Not in the very least, except in so far as that the Countess of Brakeholme certainly fainted. That does not seem to me to be anything very much out of the common. Many ladies faint upon the smallest provocation, and I am scarcely aware that my presence could so very wonderfully have affected the countess. I knew her very slightly before her marriage, and I don't mind telling you, Maybrick, for I know you are 'safe,' that I have reason to think the Countess of Brakeholme, far from taking the part of her step-daughter, is, as far as I can

gather, notwithstanding her professions of attachment, not by any means anxious for the recovery of the Lady Isola."

"At all events she has circulated the report I have told you of," returns Maybrick, "for I have it from good authority."

"Then deny it everywhere," says Clement Woodleigh, "and in proof of what you say, you may add that at the Countess of Brakeholme's special invitation, I am about to accompany both her and her husband on a cruise in the yacht round the shores of the Mediterranean Sea."

When Ernest Maybrick takes his leave, Clement Woodleigh takes his cigar and again walks up and down the studio. There is a determined, angered look upon his handsome face, and he swears a mighty and solemn oath to devote his life to seeking for and clearing the name of the Lady Isola Marbourne from any foul calumnies which the jealousy or spite of others may have conjured up against her good name.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Oh love! sweet love! what a power thou wast!
That for ever thou hast consumed my heart!

BEFORE leaving for his cruise in "The Sybil" Clement Woodleigh amply supplies Tom Bowden with sufficient money for the wants of Isola and Rupert Marbourne.

The latter has been growing feebler and feebler, and, notwithstanding the unremitting care of his devoted sister, aided by kind little Mrs. Bowden, it is quite apparent that the old man is very nearly closing his earthly career.

He is completely confined to bed, and is often almost childish in his remarks. The apothecary who is attending him is somewhat puzzled to make out exactly what is ailing him, and finally decides that it is that most convenient of maladies resorted to by the medical profession when they can give no specific name to a disease—namely: "General breakup of the constitution."

But as is often the case, as Rupert Marbourne's physical health becomes weaker his mental faculties now appear to become clearer. His past life rises up before him, and prominently there stands forth a more blurred and blotted page than any of the other blurred and blotted pages of his ill-spent life.

It is the one thing which seems the more to sear his maddened conscience, for the "still, small voice," the germ of godhead, which cannot be destroyed, has actually awakened from its life-long sleep in the bosom of the wicked old man.

Remorse very nearly, not actually seizes his soul, and through the long dreary hours of the night, as he lies awake, the dim lamp flickering before his yet dimmer eyes, he resolves to tell Isola, his sister, a secret which he has not shared even with her.

But then he fears her reproaches. These two strange beings have actually sincerely loved each other, and believe they have never had a secret one from the other.

This is true so far as Isola is concerned, and Rupert Marbourne, hardened sinner though he is, feels a certain amount of diffidence in confessing to his sister that there has been an episode in his life in which she has not alone had no part, but which she has never even heard of, and of which she cannot have the slightest suspicion.

Something tells Rupert Marbourne that he has not long to stay upon the stage whereon the scenes of his wicked life have been enacted. He has but a vague idea of a God; he thinks he has heard somewhere, and at some far away period of life, of such a Being, but only as a Being to be shunned and feared—as a God of vengeance, and not as a God of mercy and atoning love.

So Rupert Marbourne's life rises up before his mental vision, and without exactly knowing why, he feels terrified at the prospect of the great change which he feels is coming, and that right soon.

"Well, and how do you feel to-night?" asks

the kind voice of Tom Bowden, as he comes to pay his nightly visit to the invalid. "I am sorry to hear from my wife that you have passed rather a trying day."

"Not much matter," replies the invalid, faintly. "I cannot expect to see many more days, and," he continues, with more vehemence than could have been supposed from his weak state, "the fewer the better."

"Poor fellow!" says Tom Bowden, gently. "I dare say you have had a hard life of it. But we all have something to bear in this life. For instance," he continues, kindly and sympathetically, bent upon comforting Rupert Marbourne if possible, "I have often been in such trouble myself, chiefly, I confess, from want of money, that I have thought it would be better to make an end of life, and I think I should perhaps have been wiser enough to have done it, were it not for the wife and the little ones. But that was long ago, and now, thank Heaven, I can realize how wicked even the thought was."

"You are a good man," groans Rupert Marbourne.

"Heaven knows I make no pretension to be anything of the kind," says Tom Bowden, simply and reverently, "but I only know that what is in best. I feel that our lives are not in our own hands, and that it is a good thing they are not."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because, suppose for instance, that you had been suddenly cut off from this life years ago, you would not have had the opportunity of perhaps repenting of many things you may now feel remorse for, for I think such a time comes in the life of everyone living."

"You speak truly and to the point," replies Rupert Marbourne, wearily, as he leans back upon his pillow exhausted by a violent fit of coughing.

So weak and prostrate does he become that as soon as he can with safety leave him, Tom Bowden hurriedly summonses Isola Marbourne.

The apothecary also is called in; and, albeit no skilled practitioner, he knows enough to be able to see at a glance that Rupert Marbourne's stay in this world can only be numbered by hours.

The sister's grief is intense; all the more so because she, for the present, so bravely represses it. Kind Tom Bowden stays in the room, to try and render what assistance he can; but the sick man is very nearly beyond the reach of human aid.

"Isola," he calls, feebly, as the neighbouring church clock chimes out the hour of midnight.

In a minute Isola is at his bedside.

"Who is in the room with you?" he asks.

"Only Mr. Bowden," is the reply.

"Then send him away—send him away at once," he exclaims. "I have something to say to you which he must not hear."

Tom Bowden overhears the words, so there is no occasion for Isola to repeat them.

"I shall be within call, Miss Pierce, should you require me," he says, and then leaves the brother and sister alone.

Even by the dim light of the shaded lamp upon the table, Isola Marbourne can see the spasm of pain which crosses Rupert's face.

For a moment terror and wild despair takes possession of the woman's soul, as she gazes upon her brother, whom she believes to be passing away without revealing the subject preying upon his mind.

"Rupert! Rupert! My brother!" she cries, in a low, apprehensive tone, as she leans over him, "speak to me!"

For reply, he opens his fast dimming eyes. She puts a glass containing some restorative potion to his lips, and he, with some difficulty, swallows it. The draught revives him, and he says, in a faint voice:

"Isola, first of all say you will forgive me."

"Forgive you, Rupert. For what?" she inquires, in amazement.

"I have a story to tell you," he replies. "A story you little dream of, and I ask your forgiveness for not having told you of it before."

Even at this supreme moment the woman's brow clouds. This brother is the one thing on earth she has loved, and it galls her to think that there is any event of his life of which she has not been cognisant.

"Tell me what it is," she says.

"You remember Zara Montijos?" he returns.

And the old man seems to get out the name with an effort; whilst Isola's faded, withered cheek flushes, and then becomes as deadly pale as that of the dying man.

"Yes," she replies, sternly, "I remember Zara Montijos, the gipsy woman, who disgraced her tribe and was cast forth to starve. You remember all about her better than anyone, Rupert, for you were the one who saw her and her baseborn child lying dead in the woods, and who buried them?"

"Such was the story I told you all," replies the dying man; "but I told a falsehood about it. Zara Montijos died, but her babe lived."

Isola Marbourne starts.

"What more miserable complications are there to be revealed?" she asks, half bitterly.

"Not much more," he replies. "I feel my strength going, and, therefore, I must be brief in what I have to say. Before the beautiful gipsy Zara was married, I loved her; but I knew I was baseborn, that I belonged to that Pariah class so hated and despised by her race. Therefore that circumstance, added to my semi-deformity and uncouth appearance, hindered me from ever avowing my love to Zara. My affection made me diffident, and when I saw her married to another man, from that day forth I hated life and I hated mankind. Obligated by circumstances to associate daily with Zara, I saw her a neglected wife. I divined that something prayed upon her mind, and during one of Jasper Montijos' long absences I induced her to confide her grief to me, and to my joy, and yet grief and dismay, she acknowledged that she had always loved me."

The excitement is too much for the enfeebled and dying man. He leans back exhausted upon his pillows, and Isola is again obliged to administer the restorative draught.

"I could scarcely believe it," he says, as soon as he can speak. "To think that she, the beautiful, leopard-like woman whom I had so long and secretly loved with a worshipping love should have stooped to bestow a kindly thought upon me was almost too much happiness for me to bear. She told me that she hated the man who was her husband, that she had married him in sheer despair, thinking I was perfectly indifferent to her. Led on by my wild love I proposed to her that we should fly together and quit the gang for ever. All was arranged, when Jasper Montijos suddenly returned, and just then there was no possible means of our carrying our designs into execution."

Again Rupert Marbourne pauses, overcome with emotion at his recollections of the dead and gone romance of his past life. The shade of sternness has passed from Isola's face. As soon as her brother is sufficiently restored, she says, almost in a softened, broken voice:

"Rupert, if this is all you have to ask forgiveness for it is not much. I also kept a secret from you—for I loved Jasper Montijos."

The dying man scarcely seems to hear her. Rousing himself by a mighty effort, he speaks in broken sentences, and ere his spirit passes to the great unknown land, he burdens Isola Marbourne's soul with a secret before which all other events of her strange and eventful life sink into insignificance.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Alas, I pity thee, poor human soul,

For ever, ever striving for the goal.

The black-eyed and black-browed Donnas of Spain possess no power to draw Clement Woodleigh from the object of his search. In obedience to a caprice of the Countess of Brakeholme, the yacht is put into harbour, and the whole party make their way inland towards Madrid.

The Countess of Brakeholme has adopted a Spanish mantilla, and as she walks along slowly on the shaded Réja, with Clement Woodleigh by her side, neither has any idea of the desires which fill the heart and mind of the other.

During their voyage hither, Geraldine, Countess of Brakeholme, has given Clement Woodleigh very clearly to understand that she considers the Lady Isola a rather reprehensible sort of young woman, and one that it may be just as well to let remain in oblivion.

In so many words she has not said so, but she has so subtly and so cleverly hinted at it, that although she has said nothing tangible, yet she has said quite enough to convince any dispassionate and uninterested person that the lost Lady Isola must be an undesirable acquaintance of the first water.

The Earl of Brakeholme is almost happy in the discovery of a hitherto unclassified species of ant. So absorbed is his observations of the interesting creature's habits, that he is completely oblivious of what passes between his wife and Clement Woodleigh.

Indeed, the amiable and scientific nobleman is rather inclined, privately, to congratulate himself upon his good fortune in having secured the painter as a travelling companion: one so congenial to the countess, and willing at all times to entertain her, and to leave his lordship to the society of his beloved ants and centipedes.

Not so Clement Woodleigh. He is too much a man of the world not to see the direction Geraldine's thoughts have taken. He cannot be any longer wilfully blind to the fact that the Countess of Brakeholme is wildly in love with him.

It is an exquisite night, and from the distant balconies the faint twang of guitars comes upon the scent-laden air. There are a few couples walking up and down the Réja, and amongst them are Clement Woodleigh and the Countess of Brakeholme.

She is attired in an amber-coloured silk, made rather short to show her somewhat ugly feet encased in black satin shoes with sandals. The dress is profusely trimmed with black Spanish lace; a mantilla of the same is over her head and shoulders, and crimson roses are fastened behind her ear. In her mitted hand she carries a large black fan, which she flirts after the most approved fashion of a Spanish coquette.

"What are you thinking about?" she asks, suddenly, tapping Clement Woodleigh on the arm with her fan. He has been walking beside her in silence for some minutes.

"Pardon me!" he says, with a start. "I am very remiss. I have to apologise for my more than ordinary stupidity."

"You are fishing for a compliment," she exclaims, with a little laugh, "but you are angling in a shallow stream! I never pay compliments. I always say what I mean, and I mean what I say when I tell you that"—and here Geraldine lowers her voice—"I prefer congenial 'sociable silence' to conversation with one to whom I may feel totally indifferent."

The Countess of Brakeholme has thrown out a tempting bait for anyone willing to take advantage of it. But Clement Woodleigh is studiously and wilfully blind to it, and passes it by with the trite remark:

"No doubt it is much pleasanter. How deliciously the orange trees smell!"

"Deliciously!" she says, curtly, as she bites her lips to conceal her vexation, "but you have not yet told me what you have been thinking of," she continues, returning to her original charge.

He smiles, but she does not see it.

"I do not think the subject would interest you especially," he replies, as they turn a corner and advance down a shady path which leads to the river; they are sauntering on, apparently unheeding where they are going.

"I cannot think why you say so," she says, softly, with half-averted face. The hour and the place exert their influence—not to speak of the proximity of the man she feels such a wild overwhelming passion for, and the sensuous soul of the woman prompts her to say: "Nothing that

is connected with you can be without interest for me."

"Your ladyship is very good to say so," he replies, coldly. To gain his own ends he is in company of this woman, whom he thoroughly despises; he is quite aware that she is ready to compromise her husband's good name and respect and esteem, for the Earl of Brakeholme operates powerfully in the man's mind as he casts about for some indifferent speech wherewith to answer fully her very indiscreet one.

"To tell you the truth," he continues, knowing that what he is about to say invariably gives the conversation a general turn, "I have been wondering if it be possible to take any other means than those already pursued for the recovery of the Lady Isola."

Even by the faint pale light of the summer's night he can see that the Countess of Brakeholme's sallow cheek becomes livid. A look of rage and hatred overspreads her face; the passion which has been consuming her can be no longer restrained; she stamps her foot violently, and turning to Clement Woodleigh, grasps him by the arm, and almost hisses forth:

"I hate her! I hate her!" and I hope you may never find her!"

"Lady Brakeholme!" he exclaims, in well-feigned astonishment, "surely you cannot mean this!"

"Yes," she exclaims, passionately, "I do mean it! I hate Isola Marbourne! and I hope you may never find her. Oh, Clement!" exclaims the wretched woman, her voice sinking to a passionate sob, "can you not see what I mean? Does not your heart interpret my words aright?" and she looks into his impassive, handsome face in dry-eyed agony.

"Lady Marbourne," he replies, coldly, as he gently tries to disengage his arm from her grasp, "I regret this has ever occurred; let us both agree to forget it."

"Man! man!" she shrieks, almost, "are you made of marble? or has that girl so bewitched you that you find it impossible to recognise the passionate love which is laid at your feet?" and as she speaks she looks wildly into his stern, unbending countenance.

"You are not well," says Clement Woodleigh, still steadily ignoring her meaning; "let me take you back to your husband."

"I hate him also!" she exclaims, "I hate him, Oh, Clement Woodleigh, have pity on me," continues the guilty woman—guilty in soul, if not in actual deeds, "have pity upon me!"

"Lady Marbourne," he asks, sternly, "why should I have pity on you? The only pity I feel is for your husband, whom you have so bitterly disgraced by your words to-night. I know your career," he added, determined to put a stop to the awkward interview, "and I know that you have been instrumental in separating me from the woman I love better than life, from Isola, the Lady Isola Marbourne."

By the dim light Clement Woodleigh can see the expression of concentrated rage which disfigures the woman's never prepossessing-looking countenance. All restraint is cast to the winds, and she again exclaims wildly:

"Well, know all about me if you like. I care not now whether you do or not. Yes! I was instrumental in separating you from Isola Marbourne, and I confess I have tried to keep you apart. But, Clement Woodleigh, I have done it for the love of you—have done it because I love you better than any living thing."

Scarcely has she spoken the words when the Countess of Marbourne falls fainting upon the ground beside him.

It spares him the pain of having to reply to the humiliated and miserable woman. With some difficulty Clement Woodleigh endeavours to restore her to consciousness, and gives her his arm back to the hotel.

The Earl of Brakeholme meets them, and thus Clement Woodleigh is spared another tête-à-tête with the countess. Hastily retiring to his own apartment, he determines to plead urgent business as an excuse for leaving the next morning; and lighting a cigar, strolls out into the streets.

His mind is disturbed by the events of the evening. For long enough he had despised the wretched, wicked woman, but now he feels more a kind of pity to think that one of her sex could so far humiliate herself.

A thought strikes Clement Woodleigh. He feels he would do anything for the sake of finding Isola Marbourne; and he almost thinks he will turn the infatuated woman into a tool to further his search.

But then Clement Woodleigh thinks of his kindly, trusting host, and he decides not to do so. Love and inclination pull him one way, and honour sets in a counteracting force. The latter gains the day, for Clement Woodleigh is an honourable man, and he feels that the right must eventually triumph.

He walks on until he comes to the more frequented parts of the city. There are cafés and vishshops open; and sounds of music and revelry proceed from them. Suddenly Clement Woodleigh finds himself in the midst of a drunken crowd. Shouts and lamentations resound on all sides. He gathers that a man has been stabbed! A woman, uttering a piercing shriek, rushes forward, and Clement Woodleigh recognises Muriel!

(To be Continued.)

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LEAVING Jessie at home, it is time to follow Cyril to Meremoor, where, having accomplished the business intrusted to him, he sought again to lose himself in the intricacies of the law, but not with the same success. The sentiment which he had flattered himself the convictions of his reason had controlled, if not subdued, asserted itself with even greater power.

The lovely confiding girl, little more than a child, who had supplied the strongest craving of his nature, had grown into the grace and dignity of womanhood, inspiring not alone a tenderness that melted his heart, but claiming a homage he could not withhold. He felt himself powerless. He might be silent—he might conceal, but he could not forget.

It has been said that "everyone can do what he should do." While Cyril struggled to prove the truth of this, his mind was averted in some degree from personal interests by a long and pleasant letter from Ernest. His previous ones had mentioned his improving health and southern winter.

All breathed the same genial spirit, the same generous admiration of his friend. In this he spoke of their homeward course. They had arrived at Paris, and should soon be at the Grove.

This letter was followed by one of a very different description. Their journey had terminated most sadly! At Paris Mrs. Pelham had been seized with an inflammatory disease, which had terminated her life in a week. Cyril was deeply touched. He had seen her at the most impressive age.

A lovely and gentle woman, she had first made him sensible of that sweet influence of sex which animates the pure sentiment of the son to his mother, of the brother to his sister. long before the heart believes in a stronger passion. His subsequent intercourse with Ernest had deepened this first impression, for he was the reflection of herself. To him his ready sympathy was offered.

"But who," thought he, "can speak comfort to Mr. Pelham? alike unapproachable as inconceivable."

Some days afterwards, having returned rather early from the office, he followed the hum of Mrs. Page's little wheel to the outside of the door, where, for greater coolness, she had

placed it, on the clean-swept gravel-path, and, having found a seat on the step, he fell into a kindly chat with her. This gradually ceasing, he mechanically followed her movements with his eye, as in the days of his childhood, while his thoughts, perhaps, were far away.

At length he said:

"Mrs. Page, you look like one of the Fates."

"Who be they, Mr. Cyril?"

"Three old ladies, who watch when we are born, spin the thread of our lives, and then cut them short."

"Marcy on me! Why, now, you don't mean for to say that I would be so wicked as to kill anybody, do you?"

"No, no," replied he, laughing, and endeavouring to adapt the fable, but not very successfully, to her prosaic mind.

"Well," said she, "I don't call that very profitable spinnin'—always a cuttin' off the thread into all sorts of lengths. Just a waste! couldn't make warp nor fillin' on't."

Cyril smiled, and she went on:

"I s'pose I don't quite see into it. Never mind, I'll turn my labour into better account. But hark!"

Here a military air, in a clear whistle, attracted their attention.

"'Tis Pat come home ag'in. The cre'ter has been gone on one of his long tramps. Yes, there he is jest turnin' the corner."

In a few minutes Pat was with them, and, having received a hearty shake of the hand from each, and taken the chair that Cyril brought for him, he began, as usual, with his experiences.

"Well, if I'm not tired to-day, nobody never was, that's sartin'."

"When did you get home?" asked Mrs. Page.

"About noon; and, you see, Mrs. Page, I can't live without you."

A laugh, the only return that Pat's gallantry ever asked or received, was accorded.

"Well, now, I know you're burnin' for news, and I'll not disappoint you this time. I've larn'd so'thin' now, if I never did afore."

Pat's air of self-importance was no small provocative of the housekeeper's curiosity, and, while Cyril, in complaisance, seemed to listen, she suspended the motion of her wheel, and gave him her undivided attention.

"Well, to begin, for you know I love to do things reg'lar—I larn't that in the army—I thought I'd strike across the sea, and go over the Tweed this time. I hadn't been there lately, and I was a thinkin' that the quality out there must want furnishin' up. Well, I did so, and, after doin' pretty well, I come to a great old place I'd often heard tell of, but somehow I hadn't never been to, and thinkin' it wasn't obleegin' not to accommodate them too, I thought I'd stop now. But, Mrs. Page," continued he, with a look meant to concentrate all her capacity for wonder and curiosity, "you haven't no idea of what all come out of this! You're as far from it as one of them 'ere chickens, peckin' round there. Oh, the queer things in this world! Rascals lyin' in wait, old gentlemen a stormin', dogs a barkin', blankets a shakin', young ladies a faintin', pistols a p'intin', and old Pat to bear all!

"But, ma'am," he resumed, "to see her pretty face, to hear her say she wouldn't never forget me; why, I tell you, I'd a faced a battery; I'd a stormed a redoubt, if I kno'd there was a mine under it: I'd a blowed myself to atoms afore I'd a deserted her; I'd—"

"Whatever are you runnin' on so about, Pat?" exclaimed the astonished housekeeper; "who are you talkin' about?"

"Why, who should it be but that pretty cre'ter, Miss Jessy; I can't jest hit the name, but she writ it here in my pocket-book," producing it as he spoke.

Cyril, who had but imperfectly attended to Pat's narration, suspecting that he would sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, "embroider" a little, caught that name, which, however marred, his heart could not but translate; and, seizing the extended pocket-book, read on the coarse

and soiled leaf what he considered should only be inscribed on an imperishable tablet.

An involuntary exclamation escaped him, to which Pat responded by a look of acutal and eager inquiry, saying:

"Why you can't know nothin' about her, sir?"

Cyril attempted an explanation that should avert the curiosity excited; but he could better have parried eyes and ears polite than Pat's or Mrs. Page's, who both, full of real interest, and unrestrained by forms and proprieties, pressed the when, and where, and how, till they had extracted the fact that she was the individual young lady, the "one scholar that Mr. Cyril had been sent for to teach." What inference they farther drew they prudently withheld from Cyril, who now, in his turn, demanded an account of the circumstances to which Pat had alluded.

In silence he listened, but the strong emotions which the detail excited—surprise, alarm, indignation—were sufficiently intelligible. At length, starting up with uncontrollable agitation, he gave vent to his feelings in such vehement language that Mrs. Page laid her hand imploringly on his shoulder. It recalled him sufficiently for a rigid cross-examination of Pat.

"And what security is there for the future?" he continued; "why may he not renew the attempt?"

"Didn't I see to that?" replied Pat, with a knowing wink. "Didn't I stay hangin' about for days? Nobody mistrusted me; pedlars' work's like women's—never done; and then, you know, my leg got desper't bad"—another wink—"and I couldn't travel. And the women, they'd give me a meal or a night's lodging for some little notion out of my pack. All this time, you know, I was spyin' round a'ter that 'ere serpent, but couldn't see hide nor hoof of him. Well, a'ter I had pretty much gi'n him up, I goes, one day, by the old place—rather shy, though, 'cause I didn't care to have another time on't with the old gentleman; and what should I see but the grand family-coach, tip-top I can tell you, going down the road. I followed on and larn't that the family was off to London."

This was a relief—Jessie was with her parents. Assured on this point, he expressed his earnest gratitude to Pat, and left him and the housekeeper to compare their own views of the matter. As he retreated Pat said:

"Ma'am!"

"Pat!" replied she in the same tone.

"I say, ma'am, can't you see as far into a mill-stone as I can?"

"I think I can, Pat."

"Didn't you mark how he acted when I repeated them 'ere words?"

"Be sure!"

"And when she was a describin' the man she was expectin'?"

"Sure, I did."

"And didn't you notice what a frustration he was in? Now you know that, nat'rally, he's rayther still."

"Be sure!"

Here Pat gave his long, low whistle, which always, with him, signified unspeakable things. Then, with a comprehensive "Well?" he rose, adding:

"I must go now, ma'am; but if Mr. Cyril wants any message carried, or any service done—you understand? I'm ready, if it's a thousand miles off; jest tell him so, will you?"

Cyril had strayed off to recover himself unobserved. He was vexed to have betrayed so much feeling. It was exposing Jessie to vulgar gossip; it was laying open a corner of his heart never yet disclosed but to Heaven. This feeling yielded to the still stronger one excited by the danger of Jessie; to the desire to discover and punish the contriver. But he was here more at fault than she had been; for, though he had no difficulty in believing that an artful and desperate man might have been tempted to the outrage by such a prize, and that it was obvious that the villain, having seen him set on shore, had used the circumstance as a decoy,

yet he knew no one to whom her residence at Glenwater had introduced her. Conjecture, therefore, was vain; and he turned from the irritating thought to the consolatory conviction of her safety.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In the morning, Cyril went to his usual labours; but the pages that he had heretofore patiently explored, because that, however dry or obscure, he believed them, like the books of the magician, to contain the secret of life and fortune, now failed to interest him. The hours wore away wearily, and he was glad that the business of the office permitted him to leave it earlier than usual.

Taking a course over the hills, after a long walk, he found himself at his favourite spot—the height that overlooked the fall; and, throwing himself on the sward, he reclined on a little grassy mound that had pillowed his head when a boy.

For some time he thus lay, calmed by the quiet influences of the place into an unmindfulness of any distinct thing, and reckless of the damp earth on which he cast himself. A rustling in the branches near him caused him to turn, and he beheld a face, the impression of which time only deepened on his tenacious memory.

Starting up, and rejecting the hand extended to him, he met the eyes of the stranger with a fixed and indignant gaze.

"Do you not know me?" he asked, in a gentle tone.

"Too well," was Cyril's quick reply.

"Then why refuse the salutation, which, as your best friend, I have a right to claim?"

Cyril smiled contemptuously.

"I know you only as one who insists on rights, but performs no duties; who makes promises only to break them; who, having left me to dependence, would frustrate my honest efforts to support myself; who shrouds himself in mystery to escape me, and, like an assassin, stabs in the dark."

The smile that had dressed the face of the stranger remained unchanged, as if listening to the idle reproaches of a child.

"I have neither time nor disposition to discuss these charges," said he; "we have weightier matters to speak of. Come, Cyril," he added, with an insinuating tone, "'tis time that you really know me. I forgive every hard word, every injurious suspicion, however much they have wronged me, in the conviction that I have a perfect justification in my power. Would you like to go to Wales?"

At a proposition of such import, Cyril paused, and then said, "Wales! it would depend on the motive assigned for my going."

"Suppose it the strongest that could be offered. The restoration to your natural friends; the removal of all concealment in regard to your birth, your past, and your future. Would this induce you?"

"Certainly; but I should require the most unquestionable proof that such would be the result."

"Undoubtedly. This I will furnish; nay, more, I will myself accompany you."

The idea against which Cyril had struggled and revolted—that this person had claims he should find it impossible to evade—came over him.

Yet he felt that this might be the crisis of his fate, that it must not be trifled with. He hesitated, and then said, "Is that necessary? With the proper testimonials, can I not proceed alone?"

"You little understand in what these credentials consist, nor how important I, personally, am to your success. But you must confide in me; you must be advised, nay, governed by me; you will tread unknown ground, and may encounter obstacles you little think of. Without me, your attempt would be futile."

"I owe everything to Mr. Fairfax. I will take no step without his concurrence. If I am not at liberty to consult him I decline your proposition entirely."

"You are right," replied the stranger, with a readiness that looked like truth. "No one can more highly estimate your obligations to Mr. Fairfax than I do. You only anticipate what I meant to say. Consult him by all means. I will not ask of you anything that he shall not approve. I will see him myself; I ought to do so. I have much, very much, for which to thank him."

This answer, prompt and unqualified, and therefore unexpected, had its effect on Cyril.

"And the testimonials?"

"They shall be yours to-morrow. Communicate with Mr. Fairfax this evening. Meet me alone at this place to-morrow morning, say at nine o'clock, and all that is necessary to satisfy you shall be placed in your hands."

Cyril looked as if he would speak farther. He did, indeed, long to put one question, "Did his parents live? Had he no cause to blush for his birth?" But, as if divining his thought, or perhaps to test his submission, the stranger said, with significance, "Ask me nothing now. 'Tis best you should not know in part. The whole will bring explanations that will palliate, if not justify, whatever is painful. To-morrow you will know all."

Cyril, with an irrepressible desire to be satisfied, at least on one point, before they parted, said:

"Will you not, as an earnest of farther communications, give me one more assurance—your name? Remember, that for twenty years I have been denied it?"

With a smile, much as a mother would repress the importunity of her child, he replied, "To-morrow! to-morrow!" and, retreating into the thicket whence he had emerged, was next seen crossing the bridge; and, having gained the opposite side, with a farewell wave of his hand he disappeared.

"What a puppet," thought Cyril, "I am in that man's hands! At one moment wrought to fury, and the next held as if in leading-strings!"

Mr. Fairfax perceived that the housekeeper's fears were lost on Cyril; that something occupied him to the entire oblivion of any consideration of comfort or health; and, getting rid of her as soon as he could, he awaited the communication which he saw was trembling on his lip. He had not long to expect it, but, having heard, he was not so quick to reply.

The idea of parting with Cyril for a purpose that might separate them for ever, pained him inexpressibly. He could only say, while his countenance expressed much more:

"Let us see the promised testimonials, Cyril, before we farther discuss the matter. Without them it is impossible to form an opinion. I shall also see the man himself. I choose to read his face as well as his papers."

Cyril pressed the subject no farther, but the conflict in his mind was but too visible; and, unable to talk of anything else, he retired, followed by Mrs. Page, with her favourite medicament against the effects of cold, the last thing, in his present state of excitement, to be apprehended. But to this sleep did not succeed. The wind, which had risen towards night, with loud threatenings of an approaching storm, was now accompanied by a rain that descended in torrents.

The night had brought as little rest to Mr. Fairfax as to himself, and the breakfast was a sad one. When finished, Cyril rose, stood as if about to speak, looked irresolute, suddenly seized his guardian's hand, pressed it earnestly, and rushing from the house, hastened to the place of meeting.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The rain was over; but though the wind had abated, it still returned in fitful and complaining bursts, driving before it dark, broken clouds that saddened the heavens.

As Cyril approached the ravine his attention was diverted to a person approaching the opposite bank. It was the stranger, who, with long and hasty strides, bent his course to the

bridge. Cyril's eyes followed his steps, and as they did so he perceived, with a startling shock, that the abutment on the opposite side—consisting of portions of rock imbedded in the bank, and bound together by the roots of a tree that had insinuated themselves—had yielded to the pressure of the stream. The most important fragment had disappeared entirely, the others looked disturbed and loose; and the tree, whose roots had served as binders, hung down, evidently disengaged from the soil, and only slightly adhering among the stones.

To raise his hat as a signal, to wave his hand as a warning, to elevate his voice in admonition of the threatened danger, was the instinct and work of the moment. But in vain. The noise of winds and waters drowned his voice, and his gestures were not understood. The unconscious man continued to advance, and, as he did so, held something in his hand which he elevated as if in triumph.

Cyril, terrified, repeated his warning, with every gesture suggested by the necessity; the stranger, blinded by Fate, regarded them only as tokens of recognition. Pressing onward, his feet touched the bridge; in an instant his weight was upon it, and the next, a loud crash confirmed Cyril's fears.

Then, for the first time comprehending the danger, he strove to recover the bank. But no—he only made sure his destruction, lost his balance, and was precipitated on to the rocks below, even before the entire fall of the bridge; which, wrenching itself by its weight from the opposite abutment, descended with a tremendous force so near its victim as to appear to crush him.

A shriek of horror burst from Cyril. Casting a frantic look around, he imploringly called for help, but no voice responded.

The stranger lay motionless. Fearless and agile, Cyril prepared to descend the bank; and though he felt the stones and trees of which he had heretofore often made a ladder yield under him, he reached the bottom in safety, and made his way, though with difficulty and danger, to the rocky bed on which the unfortunate man lay. He saw, to his unspeakable distress, that a fragment of the bridge had fallen across his limb.

There could be no doubt of the effect. What other injuries he had received he had endeavoured to ascertain by such efforts as he was, unassisted, capable of. He could only discover that, though life was not extinct, consciousness seemed gone; a faint moan was the only sound uttered.

To leave him thus was dreadful! But how otherwise could he obtain the requisite aid. With a shudder that chilled his very soul, he exclaimed:

"And this man was, perhaps, my father! Oh, heaven! am I never to be relieved from this oppressive mystery?"

With eyes bent on the wretched being before him, arms crossed on his breast, and emotions that nearly mastered him, he remained, till Pat, with a last leap to the rock, stood beside him.

A glance at the wreck of the bridge, a few words from Cyril, and he comprehended the whole. Then, stooping down, he examined the face that was turned from him; but, starting back, with a look of amazement and awe, he exclaimed:

"The Lord is just! This is the very individual I told you of! I should know him among a thousand!"

At this assertion, confirmed by still farther examination, the revolvings of Cyril returned with increased violence—at the very moment, too, when he desired only to indulge in the new-born confidence inspired by the stranger! The revulsion nearly overcame him. The claims of a common humanity alone enabled him to exert the necessary self-control.

As soon as the catastrophe was understood, there was no lack of assistance; and Pat, having ingeniously contrived a hurdle from the branches of the trees, suggested the difficult, but only expedient of thus carrying the injured man to the nearest house, or other resting-place, where

a physician should be in readiness to attend him.

The examination was not long. A short time was sufficient to decide, from the nature of the injuries, that life could not be preserved. The final moment that comes to all was at hand. The physician removed the finger which pressed, in vain for the answering pulse; listened for the breath that no longer came; felt, inquiringly, for the heart that no longer throbbed; and, in that low tone which all instinctively use in the presence of Death, said:

"It is over!"

Notwithstanding his distrust, his indignant sense of wrong, the last charge just brought against him, and the repugnance with which, until very lately, he had shrunk from this strange man, Cyril could not hear these words without a pang.

"Yes," thought he, "it is over! The last, the only clue to my name and kindred, the only being to whom, for weal or for woe, I seemed to belong, is gone."

Every angry feeling was still. His eyes filled with tears as he contemplated that pale, and ghastly face, and repeated the last words of the stranger:

"To-morrow! to-morrow!"—"how unconscious," continued he, "of their prophetic import."

He was reminded that he was not alone, by Pat's saying, as he approached and stood by his side:

"Well, he has done what we must all do; he has gi'n in his account."

This solemn truth, though announced in homely phrase, struck to the heart of Cyril, and turned his thoughts from his personal interests to the dread concerns of the man who lay before him; in comparison with which, all earthly hopes and disappointments faded into insignificance, and he involuntarily uttered a prayer for mercy.

Having given the necessary directions, he hastened home to apprise Mr. Fairfax of the events of the morning; but the rumour had reached him, and, hurrying to the place, he met Cyril at the door, whose countenance confirmed it.

While occupied by the considerations now naturally presented, they were interrupted by the entrance of Pat. He would, perhaps, have dilated on an occurrence so startling, but he saw that, contrary to his usual practice, the fewest words were best. He, therefore, proceeded promptly to say that, in removing the body, a packet had been found lying under it, from which circumstance it had remained dry and uninjured; that not knowing what it might contain, or into what hands it might fall, he had put it immediately into his own pocket, whence he now took it.

"I expect," continued he, "that it had ought to be sent to his kin, but as I don't know nothin' where to find them, it can't do no harm to give it to Mr. Cyril."

With an eager hand it was grasped, but, unwilling to expose the intense interest it excited, he laid it on the table. He had just done so when the landlord of the village inn entered, bringing a valise, which he said belonged to the gentleman.

Here was farther matter for investigation—perhaps more evidence. But, though, in addition to the right exercised on such occasions, in order to ascertain the name and friends of the individual, they felt that they had peculiar claims to the fullest inquiry, this, for obvious reasons, could only be made without witnesses. Mr. Fairfax was therefore compelled to disappoint the evident curiosity by saying that he would make the necessary investigations in proper season; and he then quietly removed the articles to a place of safety. The prevailing idea that the stranger had been in some way connected with himself or Cyril, and the character of Mr. Fairfax, prevented all complaint.

That Mr. Fairfax did make such investigation, and that he did find matter of the deepest interest to Cyril is all that is, at present, needful to communicate to the reader. To the village

public it was proper to be explicit on one point—the name and condition of the deceased. Mr. Fairfax, therefore, lost no time in making known that the unfortunate person was proved to be Captain Vivian, an Englishman, having friends in London, to which place, immediately after the funeral, he should himself proceed, in order to convey the articles in his possession, and to communicate the intelligence of his death.

(To be Continued.)

THE BARONESS OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER IV.

THE day of the grand tournament in honour of Lady Matilda had arrived.

Castle Rushen was crowded with guests, all the principal knights of the realm having responded in person to the invitation which had been sent them, and very busy they all were in practicing their difficult evolutions with sword and lance.

Their equires barnished and polished armour and helmets. The ladies, in a flutter of pleased excitement, prepared banners and scarfs and other insignia of their favour.

The youthful Lady Matilda, as the greatest heiress in Man, and as the greatest beauty, also, in the island, was especially courted and honoured. A dozen suitors paid homage to her, but none were more sedulous in his attentions than the king.

Ivar, also, was treated with marked courtesy and respect; but, at times, it seemed to him as if there were an undercurrent of thought and sentiment against him in the king's more intimate circle.

The scene of the brilliant meeting was an open plain near the royal castle. A large, raised platform had been constructed at one side, overlooking the scene of friendly combat, and a vast awning had been stretched from one end to the other.

Mounted heralds, with the flags indicative of their office, were in readiness to make proclamation, and vast and gay was the concourse which had assembled. The whole hillside seemed alive with spectators, and in the midst of the scene, occupying the post of honour, sat the king and Lady Matilda.

"It seems to me that we are ready to begin, your majesty," said knight Wilfred, bending his knee to the king, at the close of long and busy preparation.

"Then proceed at once," returned Reginald. "Let not our noble guests be kept waiting."

Proclamation was accordingly made by the heralds, and the tournament formally declared open.

"By my troth, a goodly array," murmured Reginald, as a score of knights rode into the arena in all the pomp and pride becoming their character and the occasion. "He who is so lucky as to be victor in such an assembly will have to be a very capable warrior indeed."

The maiden bowed assent as one in a trance. Her eyes were following the movements of her lover, who sat his coal-black steed like a centaur.

"And see with what grace they go through the preliminary evolutions," added the king. "Would it not be indeed a proud pleasure for you, Lady Matilda, to be acclaimed queen of such a splendid body of men?"

A shadow traversed the fair features of our heroine, but she chased it away with a promptness that did honour to her strength of will.

"It would indeed—if I wished to be queen," she answered, with a smile that made her beauty seem almost divine to the impassioned prince. "But I see only Ivar in all that splendid group of horsemen. He seems to me the noblest knight of them all. It is, at least," she added, "the privilege of my woman's fancy to think so."

The king bit his lip, pretending to be all attention to the evolutions in progress. Not another word was spoken by him, until the knights had ranged themselves in two bodies facing each other upon opposite sides of the arena.

"It seems that there is some hitch in the proceedings," then said the king, moving uneasily in his seat. "What can it be?"

As he spoke a singular pallor of excitement and expectancy overspread his features.

"The knights seem to have fallen into some discussion," murmured Matilda.

Such was the fact. The voices of several of the proposed combatants were heard addressing Wildred all at once in considerable confusion and with much bitterness and feeling.

"Ah, here comes Wildred," ejaculated the king, after watching the scene a few moments. Again the favourite bent his knee to his master.

"If your majesty pleases," he said, "a little difficulty has arisen among us. The presence of knight Ivar is objected to on the ground that he is not a fit person to take part in this day's proceedings."

"Indeed? You astound me! By whom is this objection made?"

"By all the knights here present, your majesty. They are a unit in this declaration, and here is their written and formal protest!"

The king glanced nervously at the document thrust under his gaze.

"What is it that these gentlemen allege against the knight Ivar?" he demanded.

"His uncertain and possibly ignoble birth, your majesty! In this document, your royal and devoted knights declare, with perfect unanimity, that they believe the knight Ivar to be the son of the old fisher who claims him as such, and that in consequence the knight Ivar is not a fit associate for them. They further allege that the knight Ivar must have obtained his knighthood—if he really did obtain it—by imposing upon the good nature of King Henry, and all declare with one breath that, until further proofs, they must decline to receive the so-called knight Ivar as one of their number!"

The blow seemed mortal.

The king was nearly as pallid as a savage joy as was Matilda with amazement and indignation.

He could hardly bring himself to look at the ostracised knight, or at the fair lady with whom the fortunes or misfortunes of that knight were so closely identified.

"This is all very strange," murmured the king, huskily. "How awkward, too! Just as we were counting upon such a brilliant entertainment!"

"But does not your majesty perceive at once the injustice of these objections to Ivar?" asked Matilda, with forced calmness.

"I certainly see their unreasonableness," replied Reginald, "and greatly do I regret that my knights have taken such action in the premises. But what can be done with them? Were I thrice a king, I could not force so many brave and loyal men into associating with a man they believed to be unworthy of their society. Either Ivar must retire from the list, or the proposed tournament must be adjourned indefinitely. I beg to leave the choice with you, Lady Matilda."

Ere our heroine could reply, a horrible tumult arose in the arena. At some gross insult, from a knight near him, Ivar had given a single blow, which promptly tumbled the offender from his horse to the ground.

In an instant a dozen swords leaped from their scabbards, their points all directed at Ivar.

"Come on, any or all of you!" cried the young knight, in a voice of thunder, as he placed himself on the defensive. "If any knight here utters a whisper in aspersion of my knightly character I will wash out the insult in his blood!"

A silence as of the grave succeeded for one brief instant, and then every sword which had

been drawn in menace of our hero ratiſed back noisily into its scabbard.

"No, we don't use our swords upon such stuff as you are made of," said one of the knights, speaking for all. "We simply pass you over to the constables, as we would the veriest hind among our cattle."

At this evident invocation of their authority, a couple of legal minions approached our hero, motioning him to yield up his sword and constitute himself a prisoner.

"Stand back!" was Ivar's stern response to this summons. "A step nearer and you die!"

"Hold, all!" cried the king, arising in his place. "Let not a hand or foot be moved without my orders!"

At this juncture, a man of commanding presence arose from a seat near the king and descended into the arena.

The man was Prince Magnus, the king's only surviving brother.

"If your majesty pleases," said the prince, quietly, "I see an easy solution of the difficulty that has arisen."

The king nodded, as much as to say: "Our royal brother has the parole!"

Advancing into the midst of the angry and excited knights, Prince Magnus placed himself beside our hero, looking calmly around, and said:

"Allow me to observe, gentlemen, that you are all mistaken in supposing my young friend here," and he placed his hand protectively upon Ivar's shoulder, "to be the son of the arrant old knave who lately claimed to be his father. I think the evidence proves the contrary. And it accordingly becomes your duty to apologise to the knight Ivar for any insults you have given him upon grounds so mistaken."

The consternation this statement caused the conspirators can be imagined.

"And now that we are fairly started towards a proper understanding, gentlemen," resumed Prince Magnus, "allow me to add that I myself vouch for the knightly character of my young friend; and I declare also my belief that the knight Ivar is the equal of any of you—and that his birth is honourable. And I beg to add, with all due respect, that any knight seeking a quarrel with him upon any of these grounds will have me upon his hands also!"

The declaration had a terrible significance. Prince Magnus had long possessed the reputation of being the most formidable adversary of the realm—a man whom no one could insult and live.

And now, as quiet as was his manner, as gentle as was his voice, there was a gleam in his eyes as ominous as death.

"You heard me, I believe, knight Norden!" added the prince, as he drew off one of his gloves. "I had the honour of saying to you that you owe the knight Ivar an apology."

The knight Norden was the man Ivar had knocked from his horse. A woeful looking knight he was.

He had arisen to his feet with a bleeding face, and had been ever since looking the death he had resolved upon inflicting upon our hero in revenge for the blow which had so promptly punished his baseness. A moment this man hesitated, and then he said:

"I apologise, of course, upon the representations of your royal highness."

He hastened to do so, and his apology was kindly accepted.

"There are others in the same boat with Norden, I believe," said Magnus, still looking singularly around. "Let all such do their duty."

At this hint all save four of the knights hastened to tender their apologies to Ivar for all they had said, or done to his disadvantage.

"So far, good," commented Magnus, as his glances played like lightning over the face of the refractory four. "Am I to understand that you refuse the knight Ivar the apology due him?"

"Yes, your royal highness," replied Wildred, taking his cue from a glance of the knight. "Such is our decision."

"One moment, your royal highness," cried Ivar, as Magnus was about to challenge the knights. "With your gracious permission this is my quarrel, and I am the proper person to give these young men a lesson. I demand satisfaction as a knight and a gentleman. If that is refused I shall proclaim these men but carpet-knights and cowards."

Removing his gloves as he spoke, and with a look of scorn, he cast one glove full in the face of Wildred and another at the feet of the knight nearest him.

"Fortunately I happen to have another pair of gauntlets with me," added our hero, as he drew from one of his pockets a well-pair he had discarded that day for new ones. "And this circumstance enables me to accommodate all four of these knights with a challenge."

The second pair of gloves were cast at the feet of the second couple of offenders, and with such quiet courage and resolution that a general shout of approval and admiration rent the air. Even those knights who had so lately apologised to Ivar could not do less than join in the tribute to him.

"You see," said Prince Magnus, "that you are all constrained to admit the knight Ivar into the lists. Deny his right, and you shall deal with me."

This threat had the desired effect. The knights suddenly made the required apology, and declared the lists open to Ivar.

Nevertheless, they declined to form two opposing parties, after the usual manner, and a dead silence succeeded.

Ivar was prompt to meet the difficulty.

His eyes flashed and his face glowed, and pointing to his fallen gloves, he cried out:

"I have challenged four knights; I now challenge you all to single combat. And if it be combat à l'outrance!"

Ten of the knights accepted the impetuous challenge. The remainder retired from the lists.

"I am ready," said the knight Ivar. "Shall I begin with you, Sir Wildred?"

Wildred assented. The knights adjusted their visors, and their esquires gave a last look to their armour, while the herald blew a low, shrill blast.

As the last echoes of the trumpet died away, the knight Ivar and his foe approached each other with levelled lances, their horses moving with a wild fury, the combatants seeming cool and calm as fate itself.

"Now for it," muttered King Reginald. "Wildred is skilled in the use of the lance. Our braggart Ivar will go down before him like corn before the reaper."

The Lady Matilda shut her eyes involuntarily in a tremor of fear.

And then through the sudden hush came an awful shock of battle and the clash of opposing arms.

The conflict had begun.

The Lady Matilda, in a breathless suspense, remained with her eyes closed, her heart in a tumult for a period of time that seemed to her an eternity, but which was in reality only some four or five minutes. She was aroused by a sudden shout that waked the echoes far and near.

Looking up hastily, with a fearful, frightened glance, she saw that the combat was ended.

And she also saw that her lover, the young knight Ivar, was conqueror!

Wildred presented a pitiable spectacle. He had been unhorsed, and his steed was galloping wildly about the arena. The knight himself, wounded and bleeding, lay prone upon the ground, his esquires bending over him, while Ivar sat his horse like a statue, his lance in rest, his visor down, his bearing calm and unmoved.

The wild acclaim that had greeted the success of Ivar burst forth afresh as Wildred was borne away by his attendants.

Our hero moved his horse slowly about the inclosure while the herald again blew a blast

upon his trumpet, and declared the lists again open.

The defiant bearing of Ivar brought forth a second antagonist, a doughty-looking knight of herculean proportions, mounted upon a great war-horse, who seemed as eager for battle as his rider.

The Lady Matilda watched her lover now in fear and trembling, yet with an overflowing pride in him.

His superior lightness and skill contrasted well with the ponderous motions of his present opponent. His horse obeyed his lightest touch, and he handled his lance as if it had been a feather.

There was a sharp, fierce conflict, of which the maiden saw only the swift thrusts of glittering lances, the evolutions of the horses, the calm bearing of her lover, and then the doughty-looking knight tumbled heavily from his horse to the ground.

A second outburst of applause greeted Ivar.

The worsted knight limped off, assisted by his esquires, and again the herald's blast resounded and again the lists were declared open.

A third antagonist appeared, and shared the fate of his predecessors.

Ivar broke his lance in the next joust, and his esquire replaced it with another. This contest proved the most severe of all, but victory had made the lover of Matilda her favourite and again perched upon his banner.

A longer interval than usual occurred between this conflict and the next. Ivar dismounted and retired with his esquire, but presently reappeared upon a fresh horse and with a portion of his armour renewed.

We need not detail the incidents and progress of the jousts that followed. One by one the knights came up to the fray, fresh and full of vigour, and one by one they fell before the lance of Ivar, whose arm was nerved with indignation against them for the insults he had received at their hands, and also by his great desire to distinguish himself in the eyes of the Lady Matilda.

One by one the knights received their defeat at Ivar's hand, until ten of them had bitten the dust.

Of the number seven were wounded, three very seriously.

The last knight of the ten had been borne away, and Ivar rode the arena, with the air of a conqueror.

His second horse had been killed under him, and he was now mounted upon a third, a proud spirited creature, whose arching neck and curvetings seemed to indicate that he was proud of his rider.

Again the herald blew his trumpet, and now he called the victorious knight to come forward and receive his reward at the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty.

Ivar, with visor raised, rode towards the spot where the king and Lady Matilda were seated. He dismounted, and bent one knee to the lady of his love, the queen of the tournament.

And Lady Matilda, proud and blushing, bent forward and fastened a knot of ribbons to his helmet, while the king, in a voice whose chagrin he could not quite conceal, made Ivar a compliment upon his skill and courage.

It may be imagined that Reginald had watched the succession of jousts with amazement and anger.

Ivar's antagonists were knights skilled with lance and battle-axe, and yet they fell before our hero almost as if they had been the merest tyros in the art.

The battles had been fought à l'outrance—that is, with unprotected weapons, "to the death." It was marvellous that Ivar had escaped serious wounds, but beyond a scratch or two he was unharmed. The king was filled with a murderous hatred of the successful youth, even while he smiled upon him. He would have given much to have known him dead at that instant.

(To be Continued.)



[THE WANDERER'S RETURN.]

HER BURTHEN.

It was a fair June day. Some hints of the warmth and brightness crept even into the littered workroom of Madame Flummery's dress-making establishment through the windows looking out upon blank brick walls and glistening tin roofs.

A group composed of Madame Flummery's best "hands" were working that afternoon on the different parts of a violet silk dress. Among them, a calm-eyed, strong-faced girl, with smooth, abundant brown hair and no noticeable feature, unless it were the sensitive, heroic mouth, was sewing a fold, blind-stitch upon a flounce. She worked industriously, holding the length of lustrous stuff gathered in her ample apron. Her name was Louise Jessell.

"How much Mrs. Danvers wears this colour," remarked her next neighbour, a plump, comfortable girl, who held up the sweeping skirt admiringly as she spoke. "We made her a royal purple velvet at New Year, and yesterday she brought an organdie—a lovely, stylish thing, bunches of fleur-de-luce on a pale ground."

"Dear me," said a red-haired girl, fretfully, "I hate to work on those thin goods."

"It is all one to me, thick or thin," replied the first speaker. "So much a day for so many stitches. I try not to care because the pretty things we contrive are all to make somebody

else look prettier while I go shabby in last year's fashions."

"I try, too; but I can't help caring," was the answer. "When I see the things, that I have worked so hard to make, tried on, it makes me mad to think I can't have them. I had to alter the length of this skirt, kneeling down, while Mrs. Danvers had it on. She thought it was too long."

"Oh, yes. She wants her pretty feet to show."

"I don't mind doing it for her, though, as I do for some. She's civil enough—seems to know I am human like herself. But take some of them—Miss Maine, now, acts as if it was very kind in her not to step upon me."

"Mrs. Danvers and Miss Maine are two different people, Flora, not to be mentioned in the same breath," said the forewoman, a severe, middle-aged person, who was laying the point-lace cuffs upon the violet silk sleeves. "We have made Miss Maine's dresses these ten years. She has always been accustomed to first-class work—to the best there was. She is used to have people serve her. But this Mrs. Danvers—perhaps you don't recollect what she had on the day she first came here, but I do."

"I didn't see her that day," said Flora Giles.

"Well, then, I'll tell you about it," rejoined the forewoman, with her mouth full of pins and her eyes cornerwise on the cuffs. She didn't look no better'n you do this minnit. An alpaca dress, and a striped shawl, and a little straw

hat—in November. He was with her. They came in a carriage, and brought the things with 'em. There were five dresses. Don't you remember we worked all day on Sunday to get the last one done?"

"Of course I do. Wasn't it queer? I suppose they were just married."

"Well, I suppose they were—if they're married at all."

"Law!" said Flora.

"Gracious!" said Miss Watson—the one to whom it was all alike, thick or thin.

Louise Jessell was shaking out the long flounce. She turned her head aside, and no one noticed the red spots in her cheeks.

"I've always had my own opinion about Mrs. Danvers," continued the forewoman. "To begin with, she has never met a soul she knew here. I wonder who she does know? And then you heard what she said yesterday—that Mr. Danvers was going to Paris, and would send her some dresses. Madame said, 'Ah, Mrs. Danvers, you ought to go, too, and make your own selections. These gentlemen have very poor taste.' She coloured up, and said that Mr. Danvers knew just about what suited her. Mark my words, she won't have many more dresses made here. Mrs. Pinch will get her custom next. Then she'll buy ready-made, and so on down. Love has to be pretty hot that pays our bills. Now, Miss Watson, you may baste in this sleeve. She is very particular about the set of her sleeves."

Louise Jessell got up and drank some water. There was a white ring about her mouth.

"Louise don't like gossip," Flora laughed.

"I can't talk when I'm at work," Louise explained, making a violent effort for self-control.

"And then," said Flora, "we know that Mrs. Danvers is one of your favourites. You fairly enjoy working on her dresses."

"I don't know how anyone can help feeling kindly towards her, she is so young and pretty—and considerate."

There was a hysterical quiver in Louise Jessell's voice, and some indignation in her tone.

"Handsome is that handsome does," retorted the forewoman.

"By what authority do you say that Mrs. Danvers has done anything wrong?" asked Louise.

"Bless my soul, Miss Jessell, how you do take me up. I'm not in the witness-box, am I? What particular interest, pray, have you in Mrs. Danvers?"

"I hate to hear anybody slandered without cause, that's all."

"Time will show whether there's cause or no, Miss Jessell."

Six o'clock came at last. The violet silk was hung away completed. The tired girls took off their aprons, put on their hats and shawls, and left.

Louise lived with an elderly aunt who owned a little box of a place in the suburbs of the city. It was some distance from her business, but very comfortable when once reached. Some of the rooms had been rented for the past six months by a widow of the name of More and her two grown sons.

Waldo More was fixing the latch of the garden gate as Louise went in. He was a carpenter by trade.

"You look tired to-night, Louise," he said, in his kindly way. "Something ails you, and I must know what it is. Have you lost your place?"

"Oh, no. There is nothing, truly."

"Have I offended you, Louise?" he asked, in grieved surprise, as she shook her head in a dejected way.

"Oh, no."

And some way his patience with her touched her to the quick, and the tears she was trying so hard to repress burst forth in spite of herself.

"I want to say something, Louise. Aren't you going to give me a chance?"

"Something has happened to trouble me a little. I shall get over it. You mustn't mind."

"But I do mind, Louise. It hurts me to see you look tired and ill. And—I want the right to know what the matter is."

"Oh, no one can know!" she shuddered.

"I don't mean that I'm curious," in his pained tone, with his patient eyes again. "I only want to help you. But won't you forget it better if you go to the gardens this evening?"

"I'll see, Waldo. You won't say anything about—about my crying?"

He shook his head.

"I'll call in for you about seven," he added, as she went slowly up the stairs.

"Didn't I hear you and Waldo talking downstairs?" asked Aunt Jessell.

"Yes."

"You might have asked him in to tea to-night just as well as not," with a glance of pride at her Britannia and glossy cloth. "He's a very proper young man, is Waldo More. I like his company. And if I'm not mistaken, Louise, he likes yours."

The girl turned scarlet for a second. Yes, Waldo liked her company, she knew, and she his. But this sudden trouble, which no one must know, opened like a gulf between them. Louise could not enjoy her tea, and when she went out Waldo was waiting to take her to the gardens.

"We have known each other six months, haven't we, Louise?" the young man said, reflectively, as they sat down after a rather silent stroll.

"Yes."

"I don't know," he went on, after a wretched little pause; "I have been thinking that we were a good deal to one another. But it seems all at once as if someone or something had come between us. Is it so, Louise?"

Once more, in the same story way, she said, shortly:

"Yes."

"I didn't know—of course I didn't know there was anyone you cared for more than you do for me, or I shouldn't—I shouldn't have troubled you, Louise?"

"Don't, Waldo. Oh, you can never understand it and I can't explain it to you. Let us go home," she ended, suddenly rising.

He followed her without a word. They had talked and thought so much of this excursion. And this was the end of it. A more selfish man than Waldo More would have been indignant. A more selfish woman than Louise Jessell would have been politic. As it was, they were both miserable, without hope of a solution of a mystery which had risen like a blank wall between them.

"I didn't look for you home so early, Louise?" said Aunt Jessell. "I hope you and Waldo haven't quarrelled?"

"Oh, no, aunty."

"Louise Jessell, have you refused that young man?"

"He has never offered himself yet."

"Then it was because you wouldn't let him, for if ever there was an offer of marriage in a fellow's heart 'twas in Waldo More's to-night."

"Oh, aunty, how experienced you are!" trying to speak gaily.

"Yes, I've seen something of girls and something of young men in my day—and I'll risk Waldo. You'll never better him, depend upon it. If you're thinking to do as Clara did the sooner you get over the notion the better for you. 'Tisn't every handsome face that gets a rich husband like Mr. Danvers. If Clara's got any heart how does she feel, do you think, when she comes into the shop and sees her own sister toiling over her finery? Take a smart, honest young fellow like Waldo More. He is worth ten of that 'ere Danvers, if he has got a mint of money."

Poor Louise! She had no answer to make. What a relief it would have been to have confided to someone what was on her heart. But she dare not. To begin with, the tormenting bit of gossip she had heard might be wholly untrue. In that case silence was her better course. Or it might be true. What in that case? She could not permit Waldo More to pledge himself to her when she might bring mortification and disgrace upon him through

Clara. And she could not confide in Aunt Jessell. There had been always a sore spot that Clara was willing to accept wealth and station at the cost of abandoning those who had loved her all her life. Louise knew the mixture of indignation, malicious exultation and self-commissioner which would follow Clara's downfall. She could not evoke it by confiding in her aunt.

Two years before, when Clara Jessell was eighteen, she had graduated from the High School, which Louise's exertions had enabled her to attend. She had soon obtained a situation as accountant, and had attracted the attention of Ralph Danvers, a member of the firm. He was an Englishman, and spent about half his time abroad purchasing for the firm. At the time he was about thirty-five years of age. A coarse-natured man, with the birth and manners of a gentleman, he had fallen profoundly in love with his pretty employée.

The result was that Clara agreed to give up all communication with her family for the sake of becoming his wife. She had bidden Louise and Aunt Jessell good-bye one morning more than a year before, and gone away with Ralph Danvers. From that time they had not had the privilege of addressing her one word.

Louise had borne it all gladly. Clara was not fitted for poverty and work. She suited the laces and jewels and soft silks, the elegant rooms and luxurious carriage, which had fallen to her lot. Louise was content to give up her claim, in order that she might have them. But now—had the sacrifice been made in vain? Worse than in vain. Had it brought disgrace, humiliation, agony, to them all? What if the forewoman's hint were true?

Mrs. Danvers was to come to the shop the following day to try on her dress. And Louise resolved to make an opportunity to speak to her. When she brought in the violet silk she swept the handkerchief, which Mrs. Danvers had laid down, under her apron, and suddenly produced it after the customer had left.

"May I carry it to her?" she asked Madame Flummery.

"I suppose so," was the ungracious assent. "One would think Mrs. Danvers, and not I, paid for your time, though."

Louise ran swiftly after her sister, who stood within the doorway.

"Clara, I must see you for a few moments. Where and when shall it be?"

"Oh, Louise, I cannot tell. I am so closely watched."

"But I must, cost what it will."

Mrs. Danvers trembled and glanced around. Her sister mistook her meaning.

"You do not wish to speak to me. Oh, Clara—"

"Hush, Louise, in Heaven's name! You know nothing of what you are saying. I am the most miserable creature alive. And the most helpless."

"But, if you will, surely you can give me a five minutes' interview."

"I am watched. Every servant is a spy. But this morning the coachman is sick, and a strange man is driving," she suddenly added. "I had forgotten that. It will give us an opportunity. Get in the carriage with me. Now that we have spoken together, I cannot give you up," and Mrs. Danvers clung nervously to Louise's hand.

Louise stepped into the carriage and closed the door, with no thought of consequences. There was too much at stake to think of consequences.

"Clara," she asked, abruptly, "are you married to Mr. Danvers?"

"Louise, why do you ask me such a question?"

"Because people are saying you are not, and that he is going to leave you. I want to know all about it. Who married you, and where is your certificate? I must have the means to silence such stories at once."

"I am married, solemnly and truly, Louise, I am married. But I cannot furnish you with any proofs."

"Why not? What sort of a man is Mr.

Danvers to allow such stories about his wife? Don't you know your word goes for nothing?"

"I am helpless. Oh, Louise, do not look at me with such dreadful eyes."

"Clara, don't force me to despise you. No one is so helpless as you assume. If Mr. Danvers is your husband, he should make it plain to the world. If he is not—will you continue to bear his name and spend his money?"

"You are cruel, Louise."

"Clara, you need not tell me that a man who meant to do right by you would set his servants to watch you for fear you should speak to your own sister."

Mrs. Danvers, with her lovely gold hair, in her French hat with its clustering pansies and streamers of tulle, was crying silently. But it did not misbecome her to cry.

"You can't understand, dear Louise."

"Louise was silent for a moment, then she said, resolutely:

"I should not have insisted upon this interview unless I had been very much in earnest. I must see your marriage certificate."

"Indeed—indeed, dear Louise—"

"I must. If you will not show it to me, I shall go to Mr. Danvers."

Clara opened her velvet reticule and took out her dainty leather purse. From an inner fold she took a bit of thin paper, and with lips trembling and cheeks flushed she spread it before her sister. With eager eyes Louise gazed at the little document which might consign her to abandon her own little hope of love and happiness, and read the certificate, duly attested, that Clara Jessell had been legally joined in matrimony to—not Ralph Danvers—but Reginald Merriam. It was a cheat, then, after all. And poor foolish Clara was a willing dupe.

"I told you you would not understand; that it would not do you any good to see it," she said, refolding the paper.

"Do you understand it?" Louise asked, grimly.

"Yes, I do."

"And you are contented with things as they are?"

"I cannot better them now. Oh, dear Louise, some time you will be sorry you were so harsh with me. Don't think I do not love you. Some days I cry for hours because you cannot see my beautiful little Reginald—you and aunty would love him so. And when Mr. Danvers goes away in a few weeks—I mean to contrive to have you see him."

Louise had no heart for words. Clara's situation seemed to her to furnish no ground for hope. Silently and desperately, as the carriage rolled along, she tried to put aside her yearning for love and home and happiness, and set her face toward the reality which sooner or later would come.

She must cease to think of Waldo More; of a home of her own, of ease and joy. She must work and save against the time when Clara and her baby would be discarded, shelterless, nameless, and none but her to help them.

Poor Louise, two or three weeks later, the busy season being over, Madame Flummery discharged her. She was needed no longer. In the face of this disaster Waldo More renewed his suit.

"I don't know as you want my company, Louise," the young man said, as he joined her; "you've held off, of late—as if we didn't care for one another. And yet in spite of all I believe we do. But you can't deceive me. You're in some trouble. And I'd give my right hand to get you out of it. Will you be engaged to marry me?"

"I don't know. Oh, I cannot tell you. Something may happen—I can't explain it—but if it does, I shall not belong to myself. I shall have to take up another's burthen, and live my life under it."

"I will share it with you."

"No one could share it."

"I believe you are making a mountain out of a molehill," the young man said, in a light, tender tone. "Now let me tell you—don't move. I'm not going to ask for any explanations. But

"I'll say we're engaged. Yes, we are, Louise. Well, then, listen. Tom is to be married shortly, and mother is going to live with him and his wife. Now, then, why can't we be married, too, and live here, just as we are?"

"Dear, good Waldo"—Louise did not resist the pressure of his strong arm as he drew her toward him—"oh, if I could tell you all, it would be such a relief. But I must not. It is another's secret."

"I don't want to know it. I have just learned all the secret I care about. And now, while I hold you safe here, you must promise me—you shall not go to work in those stifling shops any more."

Louise rested an instant. It was so sweet to rest, to be beloved, cared for, caressed.

"I can't promise, Waldo," she said, at last, with an effort—"only this. I will let you know in a few weeks, one way or the other, how it is to be."

"I am content," he said, pressing his lips to hers.

Those were contented weeks which followed. Louise, with the elastic hope of youth, suffered herself to feel that Clara's affairs were all right since the weeks following Mr. Danvers' departure passed without any communication from her sister. Had his departure meant desertion, surely Clara must have come to her for help. The loss of her situation even turned out a sort of blessing in disguise, for she had so much patronage that she was able to make as much at home as her wages amounted to, and with less exertion.

Her aunt, too, was very feeble through the warm weather, and needed her care. Indeed, it seemed that the old lady had not long to live; and in November, after a week's confinement to her bed, she was taken quietly out of life, rejoicing in the thought that her dear Louise, to whom she left her small estate, had a protector to look out for her when she was gone.

It was the week following the old lady's funeral. Tom Moore and his mother had removed to their new home to make ready for Tom's bride, and Waldo had a job which had taken him out of town. Between eight and nine o'clock Louise was sitting quietly at work. By-and-bye, in the pauses of the storm, a sound attracted her notice. It was like the wail of a child.

Then she heard a weak knock, a hand upon the knob, and again a child's cry. She opened a window over the door, and said, quietly:

"Is it you, Anna?"

"No, it is Clara. Oh, Louise, why don't you come?"

For an instant a terrible fear came over strong, healthy Louise Jessell, alone there as she was. The voice which called was like a voice out of another world pronouncing a sudden judgment upon her.

"I am coming, Clara," she said, hardly knowing that she was speaking, and her feet shook beneath her as she ran down the stairs and unbolted the door.

The sleet and blast drove in her face as she opened it, and a form stepped in, out of the darkness—Clara, pale and drenched, with her yearling boy in her arms—and fell at Louise's feet.

Louise took her cold hands and pressed them gently.

"Circumstances have absolved me from my promise, Louise. I am going to tell you the whole. I had been married three months when my husband told me of the deceit which he had practised, and showed me my certificate made out in a different name from that by which I knew him. At the same time he told me his story. He was already married under his true name. The union was unfortunate, and after living with his wife a couple of years he determined to leave her, to change his home and name, and bury himself to his past. He came to this country, was in business here as Ralph Danvers, and no one suspected his identity. Until he saw me, he had no thought of remarry-

ing. When it was too late he regretted bitterly that our marriage had not been delayed till he could procure a divorce, and marry me under his true name. But, as he said, he allowed his selfish ardour to overrule his judgment. He married me, if it can be called a marriage, while he had another wife alive. He intended, however, to do right as far as he could. He set to work to obtain grounds for a divorce from the woman who was his legal wife, and meantime he was in constant fear that she would trace him, and have him arrested for bigamy. That was the reason he guarded me so. He feared to let anyone know that he was married again, lest they might recognise him under his assumed name. In June, at the time I met you, he believed that everything was in readiness for procuring his divorce. He left me for a two-months' absence; supplied me with money for the time, and tore himself away with every appearance of grief at separation. Instead of two months, he has been gone more than four. And I have not heard one word from him. Louise, this is my story. Is the past clear? And what am I to think of the future?"

"I will think for you, dear," said Louise, bravely, "You and the little boy are my charge now."

"Oh, Louise, don't you believe it is true? Don't you think he will ever come back to me?"

"Never, Clara. It is a cheat all through. No matter, my poor dove. I can take care of you."

Clara was shivering with excitement and from her exposure. Louise put her to bed beside the little boy, who was sleeping sweetly after his drink of warm milk, and then went back to her lonely room and her quiet thoughts.

But the day's drama was not yet done. Just as the clock was striking ten, there came a strong, familiar rap at the door which had admitted Clara two hours before.

"Still up, eh, little woman?" said Waldo More, cheerily. "I should not have knocked if I had not seen your lamp so bright."

"I did not expect you, Waldo. I will get your keys."

"And mayn't I come to your fire? It is fearfully cold."

He saw her hesitate.

"You are not alone, are you, Louise?" he asked.

"No—Waldo, it has come. They have come. You know what I told you. I do not belong to myself any more."

"Of course you don't," he laughed. "You belong to me."

But he felt secretly troubled.

"No. Don't make it harder," she said, with an attempt to smile. "I have got another's burden to bear, and I must bear it alone."

"This is sheer nonsense, Louise. Your burdens are mine henceforth. Come, clear this mystery up for me."

She shook her head.

"There is enough to bear without exposure. If you love me—if you would save me from more than I can endure—leave me, Waldo. Forget me. I can never be anything to you—to any man—now."

"You have trifled with me," he said, half angrily, at last.

"Let it go so."

"You may think it is clever, but I tell you, Louise Jessell, I call it cruel. I've given you an honest man's honest love, and you've amused yourself playing fast and loose with it. Now, it may be fun to you, but it's death to me, and I'm through to the end of my patience. I don't want to hear any more of your nonsensical mysteries. If you or any of yours are in trouble I am ready, for your sake, to put my shoulder to the wheel and help them out of it; but you needn't think I'll be put off and taken up in this whimsical fashion for ever. You know whether I suit you, and you know that I want you. Now, you must decide once for all."

"I have decided, Waldo, or rather Fate has decided for me. Good-bye."

Her teeth were chattering. He went, closing the door behind him, shutting her in, as it

seemed, with her hard doom. She sat down on the bottom stair, shivering, and began to cry. She wished she had told him. But no! how could she tell him such a story? It must rest as it was.

The night passed. The wintry morning came, blithe and bright. Louise put aside her heart-ache to minister to the needs of her little family. What a change had come! There was so much to be done. Clara was so low-spirited, so helpless after the indulgence of two years; the little boy was so full of life and mischief, and the means of support were so scant.

Waldo More never returned. A few days after Tom came for the few articles of furniture remaining in the rooms, and somewhat later Louise succeeded in renting the tenement in which the Mores had lived. They settled down quietly to their new life. Clara talked much of her hardships and disappointments. No one supposed that Louise had hardships or disappointments.

The winter was long and dreary. When the spring weather grew mild again Clara, for the first time, seemed to find a resource which diverted her from her sorrows. It was in the little garden which Aunt Jessell had cherished in years gone by.

There was a high picket-fence, and the shrubbery grew tall and dense within. It was therefore Louise from her window who noticed one morning a gentleman walking slowly along the sidewalk, making an effort to get a distinct view of those inside the inclosure. A cold shiver came across Louise at the sight. The man she saw was him she knew as Ralph Danvers.

Late in the afternoon Clara went into the garden, and when Louise went out she saw Danvers had Clara's hands in his, but he dropped them in obedience to Louise's look. Clara sank into the old chair.

"I knew he would come, Louise," she said.

"Clara has told you, no doubt, of the plans with which I left her. I was prepared to contest the divorce I hoped to obtain, and to which I was morally entitled. However, she was ill—ill unto death. It is a month now since she died. I am rich, as you know. I wish to return immediately. Will you accompany my wife and me, Miss Jessell? Will you not shake hands in token of pardon?" And with his courteous smile Reginald Merriam extended his smooth white hand.

But Louise drew back.

"I am glad, for their sake, that you have come," she said, coldly. "What I have done was for her, not you, and needs no thanks."

"Oh, Louise, a Christian must forgive," wept Clara, over the head of her wondering boy.

"I can't—yet," said the girl, briefly.

Waldo More was home again. Mrs. More had been so occupied about Tom's affairs six months before that she had never guessed Waldo's disappointment, so she talked on, unembarrassed.

"Mrs. Danvers, or Mrs. Merriam, whichever it was, had gone abroad, with a nurse for the boy and all sorts of extravagances. Louise would have none of her brother-in-law's favours. She was glad on Clara's account, too, no doubt, but she was firm to the last. So they went off and left her, and she goes on with her dress-making just the same. And a neat fit she is, too, and very reasonable."

Waldo excused himself suddenly from the tea-table. Mrs. Tom had expected him to see some of the young ladies home, but he had an engagement—such a pity! He went straight to the old home, and Louise sat alone in her garden in the early dusk.

"I know all about it, Louise? Can you ever forgive me?" he asked.

Louise found it easy to remember then that a Christian ought to forgive, and she did not feel at all like a pagan.

"I've often thought it would have been better to have told you in the first place, Waldo. But it seemed such a horrid thing to tell."

"Ah, Louise, it was too great a risk. You nearly wrecked my happiness for life."

"And my own, too, Waldo," she answered.

The dew fell on the roses, and a cricket chirped in the grass, and the lovers sat there happy and silent, giving thanks.
The burthen was lifted, and it was not too late.
W. H. P.

FACETLE.

INFORMATION.

(Scene: On board the steamer Clansman, off Glenelg Pier. Ferry-boat alongside.)
CAPTAIN (sternly): "Is there nae cargo for that boat?"
SEAMAN: "Yes, sir."
CAPTAIN: "Then what is it waiting for?"
SEAMAN: "The cargo, sir." —Judy.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

YOUNG LADY VISITOR: "You'll excuse me, Biddy, but I think your tea is not very good; I'm afraid you don't deal at a good shop."
BIDDY: "Well, miss, you see a body cannot expect to get as good tea when they buy it by the ha'porth as when they buy it by the ounce." —Judy.

FROM JUDY'S BUTCHER.

WHAT is the difference between a fine fat "Southdown" and Zadkiel?—One is a profitable wether, and the other is a weather prophet? —Judy.

A SAD CASE.

THE young man who was caught sharpening a carving-knife on his own back explained the awkwardness of his attitude by saying that "Melancholy had marked him for her bone!" —Judy.

TO ARKEOLOGISTS.

WERE you aware that Noah was the first arkitekt?—"No-ah was not!" —Judy.
"EX-TOLL-ED" Examples of Engineering—The freed bridges. —Funny Folks.

HOW THEY NAME IT.

THE horny-handed workman calls it "pay," the skilled mechanic "wages," the city clerk "salary," the banker "income," a landowner "revenue," a lawyer "fees," a burglar "swag," but it all comes to the same thing at the end of the week.

To make the best tooth-powder—Grind your teeth. —Punch.

A TRUE ARTIST.

MAMMA (to Tommy, who has been allowed for a few minutes to wait at table): "Now, Tommy, kiss me, and go to bed."
TOMMY (to Footman): "Do you ever kiss the missus, Charles?"
FOOTMAN: "No, sir?"
TOMMY: "Then I won't!" —Punch.

MEDICAL REMUNERATION.

DOCTOR: "Um! most insolent!" (To his wife.) "Listen to this, my dear." (Reads letter aloud.) "Sir,—I enclose a P. O. Order for thirteen shillings and sixpence, hoping it will do you as little good as your two very small bottles of 'physic' did me." —Punch.

COMFORT TO CANADA.

DEY those tears, freely flowing—
List trumpet and drumming!—
If Dufferin's going,
"The Campbells are coming." —Punch.

DEGENERATE TIMES.

FIRST DRAGON: "Awfully fine girl, that!"
SECOND DRAGON: "Ye-as—but hasn't got a word to say for herself. Asked her if she wasn't awfully fond of hunting? Said she'd never been on a horse in her life! Now what's a feller to say after that? Can't make out what girls do talk about in these days!" —Punch.

FROM BOW STREET.

"ONE for his knob and two for his heels," as the rogue said when he stole a pair of boots and a wide-awake! —Judy.

GOODNESS GRACE-IOUS.

WHEN is Mr. Grace, the famous cricketer, like a radical newspaper?—Why, when he is making hard hits at Lord's, of course. —Judy.

ENTRE NOUS.

WHAT is the difference between "collision" and "collusion"?—Surely U and I ought to know. —Fun.

WHY is the graceful vine like an almost hopeless member of the awkward squad?—Because it has ten-drills. —Fun.

SCRAPING AN Acquaintance—A barber shaving a friend. —Fun.

A "FITTING" QUESTION.

ONE often hears of a man being "fitted to a tea," but never to a dinner. Is this because the latter so often "disagrees" with him. —Judy.

Is it a phys-ical impossibility for a doctor to laugh at a joke? —Judy.

"MARKED MEN."—Tattooed sailors. —Judy.

WATER CREASES.—Ripples. —Fun.

HINT FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD.

EMPLOY married women if you wish to get dictation done properly. —Fun.

WHAT sort of consulting doctor ought a railway passengers' assurance company to have?—An acci-dental surgeon. —Fun.

THE KIND.

"THAT's the sort of umbrella that people appropriate," said a gentleman to a companion one morning, showing him a very handsome one.

"Yes," rejoined his companion, quietly. "I thought so when I saw you holding it."

BED-TIME AND HARVEST.

Sown in the rich, deep soil,
Strewn in the stony ways,
Whence comes the loving toil
Finished in harvest days?
All from a Hand above.

All from the Lord on high,
All from His boundless love,
Letting no good thing die!

Tears from a Master's heart,
Blood from a thorn-crowned head,
Not for earth's fertile part
Only, the drops were shed!
Not from rich fields alone
Reaps He the ripe corn in—
Seeks it from stone to stone,
Where it is poor and thin!

Fields by deep blessings crowned,
Easy the light work there!
But 'tis the wasted ground
Calleft for saving care!
All that by faith may be
Garnered from stormy sin,
Taket the Lord when He
Gathers His harvest in! W. C.

GEMS.

MEN, till a matter be done, wonder that it can be done! and, as soon as it is done, wonder again that it was not sooner done.

Boys that have been properly reared are men, in point of usefulness, at sixteen; while those that have been brought up in idle habits are nuisances at twenty-one.

We often live under a cloud; and it is well for us that we should do so. Uninterrupted sunshine would parch our hearts. We want shade and rain to refresh them.

STATISTICS.

CONSUMPTION OF WINE.—According to the latest returns, the annual consumption of wines per head in the various European countries is as follows:—By it may be seen that we are not of much account as wine consumers. One hundred and thirty litres per head are consumed in Spain, 115 in France, 109 in Italy, 109 in Portugal, 84 in Greece, 65 in Austria, 58 in Switzerland, 46 in Baden, 26 in Wurtemberg, 13 in Bavaria, 8 in Great Britain, 7 in Belgium, 6 in Holland, 4 in Prussia, 4 in Russia, 3 in Denmark, 2 in Saxony, 2 in Sweden and one and a half in Norway.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MULLEIN LEAVES FOR CATARRH.—The smoke of mullein in leaves has long been considered as a specific for catarrh. It will doubtless, in many cases, alleviate, if it does not cure. The leaves should be thoroughly dried and then used the same as tobacco in a pipe. The smoke should be pressed to the back of the mouth and exhaled through the nose; once or twice a week will suffice, and should be persevered in.

AN INDIVIDUAL BREAKFAST DISH.—Break three eggs into a small stewpan; add a saltspoonful of salt, a quarter of that quantity of pepper, and two ounces of fresh butter, the fresher the better; set the stewpan over a moderate fire, and stir the eggs round with a wooden spoon, being careful to keep every particle in motion, until the whole has become a smooth and delicate thick substance; have ready a convenient sized piece of toast, pour the eggs upon it, and serve immediately.

FLOATING PUDDING.—Nearly boil 1 quart of milk; wet smooth five tablespoonfuls of corn-starch; add three beaten eggs and a little salt, stir all into the boiling milk till it thickens. Take up and add a teaspoonful of vanilla. Have ready a dish with 1-4 of a cupful of sugar strewed in the bottom. Turn in the hot pudding and strew over the other 3-4 of a cupful of sugar. Cover close and set in a cool place. When served cold, the pudding will be found floating in a sweet syrup, which is its sauce.

TO RESTORE THE HAIR AFTER ILLNESS.—Equal parts of best brandy and strong black tea, shaken well together and rubbed well into the roots of the hair once daily, will usually restore the hair after illness. Be careful not to scratch or irritate the scalp with rough combing and brushing. The mixture should be made at least once in three days, even in cool weather.

SEA SICKNESS AND ITS TREATMENT.

By a number of observers, nitrite of amyl in five drop doses is said to exert a favourable influence in sea sickness. A writer in the "Lancet," Dr. J. R. Leeson, says, on the subject:

"There are two theories about sea sickness: one that it is owing to the food tossing about in the stomach, and teasing it and the diaphragm with its jactitations, nausea and vomiting being the natural consequence; the other that the stomach has nothing to do with it, its cause being a congestion of the brain and cord, which acts in a reflex manner on the stomach. Those who hold the latter, of course, would expect great things from nitrite of amyl, and knowing, as we do, the marked effect it has on the 'status epilepticus,' one might become too sanguine.

"Which of these two theories is right I do not pretend to say, but I have an idea that most cases are due to a little of each, and that, with a loaded stomach and congested liver, we may expect but little from amyl; whereas in cases more purely nervous, especially as are seen in women, we have a very fairly successful remedy, and one that warrants much more varied and extensive trial than it has hitherto received."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JOHN P.—1. No. 2. The short "e." 3. No precise rule, but the "ed" is not commonly used as a distinct syllable.

SALVATO.—We know nothing of the doctors you mention, but would advise you to go to one of the hospitals.

CYRUS.—Prior to the passing of the Married Women's Property Act a man was liable for his wife's debts previous to marriage. Now, we believe, a man is only liable to the extent of the property his wife brought him.

A.—The engagement ring is worn on the right hand.

GERTRUDE & MABEL.—Write to the publisher, at the office, Strand, W.C., and he will doubtless forward you a copy weekly.

G. F.—There is no genuine innocuous recipe we can give you to render your complexion pale. To be satisfied with Nature's gifts is the best advice we can give you.

J. H. N.—Your lines on the waning summer are pretty, but not quite up to our standard for publication. Try again; we shall always be happy to give you our honest opinion on your effusions.

JACK TAR.—Apply to one of the shipping agents on Tower Hill, who will doubtless furnish you with all particulars.

PLAYGOER.—We do not go in for matters theatrical.

F. F.—Handwriting very fair for the position you are now entering upon.

J. D. C.—Send your advertisement, drawn out in a similar manner to others on this page, and it will be inserted in due course.

ORHAMPTON.—1. A man cannot sell his goods by public auction unless he holds an auctioneer's license. 2. A man who hawks his own manufactured goods does not require a license.

A WORKNOT PARENT.—Your husband should make application to the master or matron of the workhouse, and state his willingness and ability to withdraw and support the children, when no doubt they will be given up to him.

L. W.—You did quite right in repelling the young man. We would not advise you to renew his acquaintance.

JESSIE.—The man is always liable for the weekly amount after the order has been obtained. You can apply for another warrant at any time.

ELIZABETH.—By your description, we opine you are prepossessed in the young man's favour. If your heart and judgment incline towards him accept him as your lover, after consultation with your parents.

I. S.—Tar water, if applied to a boil, will sometimes disperse it and prevent much of the pain it would otherwise occasion.

FRED.—Time will do it, but what time is composed of it is difficult to say.

SAM.—You should take plenty of exercise in the open air, and consume as much vegetable food as your digestive powers can healthily dispose of.

B. A.—The point of jealousy to which you refer should be settled between you and your husband.

LOUIE.—The search you have made cannot have been a thorough one, for the lines you allude to were written by Sir Walter Scott. They commence with the seventeenth line of the 18th stanza of the 8th Canto of "The Lord of the Isles," and correctly copied read as follows:

"Oh! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the little archer meant!
And many a word at random spoken
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!"

A WELL-WISHER.—We know of no fluid nor anything which could be concocted to produce the effect you desire, and are disposed to think that the result at which you aim will never be achieved in the manner you propose.

MILLY.—We are compelled to decline the manuscript just now.

TED.—We are unable to furnish the information you require.

BEET.—It would seem that the distance of the place at which you are stationed from the locality where the young woman hails will place insuperable difficulties in the way of farther acquaintance.

BROOMS and STOCKPOT, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Brooms is twenty-three, tall, light blue eyes. Stockpot is thirty, dark, medium height, hazel eyes, domesticated. Respondents must be about the same age.

MAUD and KATIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about nineteen. Maud is seventeen, handsome, of a loving disposition. Katie is eighteen, fair.

EMILY C., sixteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about seventeen, medium height.

J. M. M., twenty-two, fair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady with a view to matrimony.

FOUL-ANCHOR JACK and CAT'S HEAD STOPPER, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Foul-Anchor Jack is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes. Cat's Head Stopper is twenty-one, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

IKET MO, ALLEY SLOPER, and EUCHEE FACE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Iket Mo is twenty, good-looking. Alley Sloper is twenty-one, medium height, handsome. Euchee Face is twenty-two, tall, and fond of home.

ROSE and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Rose is nineteen, dark hair and eyes. Lily is eighteen, fair.

NELLIE and KITTY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Nellie is nineteen, dark hair and eyes. Kitty is eighteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, and loving.

P. A., F. W., and L. P., three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. P. A. is twenty-two, good-looking, dark hair and eyes. F. W. is twenty-one, tall, dark hair, light eyes, fond of home. L. P. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be good-tempered, of a loving disposition.

HOME AGAIN.

A YOUNG wife stood in silence

Weaving soft spells of love;

Gazing upwards with tearful eyes

To the blue-vaunted heavens above;

Thinking of a dear and absent one—

Her true-hearted sailor love.

He had sailed away from harbour

'Mid rumours of coming war.

And her eyes once bright were saddened,

And never the old light bore.

As she gazed on the smiling heavens

With a thought of the days of yore.

A gentle tap on the shoulder,

And a fearful, well-known voice,

Told her that life was sweet again,

And made her fond heart rejoice;

She would not change her station now

For a queen's, if she had her choice.

He had come back true and steadfast

From the ocean's storm and strife,

Manly and strong in his love for her,

To gladden her weary life—

To a sailor's safest harbour

The arms of a loving wife.

O. P.

PINTAIL and SWINGLETREE, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Pintail is twenty-three, medium height, fond of music, blue eyes. Swingletree is twenty-six, fair, good-looking, fond of dancing.

GERTRUDE and MAUD, sisters, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Gertrude is twenty-four, good-looking. Maud is nineteen, dark hair and eyes.

ELLA, fair, tall, would like to correspond with a young man.

GUSTAVE, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady with money.

NELLIE and KATE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Nellie has brown hair, blue eyes, medium height. Kate is nineteen, brown hair, grey eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

ADA, twenty-seven, good-looking, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty, fond of home, and of a loving disposition.

F. L. and J. C., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. F. L. is dark. J. C. is fair. Respondents must be fond of home and music.

G. D., twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be loving.

CLARA, twenty-three, fond of home and children, loving, golden hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-eight, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

MILLY, nineteen, tall, thoroughly domesticated, loving, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be about twenty-one.

T. H. and F. D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. T. H. is twenty-two, of medium height, fair, loving. F. D. is twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

H. F., twenty-two, fair, dark blue eyes, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-five, dark hair and eyes.

WILL, twenty, medium height, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three with a view to matrimony.

T. F. G., twenty, light brown hair, blue eyes, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, tall, fond of home and children.

J. B., twenty-two, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-six, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

E. E., twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman. Must be about twenty-five, dark, fond of home, and blue eyes.

CONSTANCE, twenty-three, brown hair, hazel eyes, tall, domesticated, good-tempered, fond of music, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-four, fond of home, fair, loving.

C. T. and W. J., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. C. T. is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. W. J. is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

RICHARD L. T., eighteen, dark hair and eyes, dark, tall, good-tempered, wishes to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

ISRAEL, twenty-four, good-looking, tall, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty, fond of home.

D. M. and W. A., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. D. M. is twenty-one, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, good-tempered. W. A. is seventeen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

G. H. S. G. is responded to by—Jane.

WILLIE by—Maude, tall, dark.

G. C. by—Pearl of the Ocean, twenty-three, medium height, good-looking.

MASTER by—Fay, twenty-three, tall, dark eyes, fond of home.

F. M. by—O. E. W.

E. L. by—J. W. B., twenty-two, fair.

NED by—Jennie, medium height, dark hair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition.

TOM by—Kate, dark hair, grey eyes.

BOB by—Nell, light hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing and music.

CHARLIE by—A. S., twenty, fair, thoroughly domesticated.

MARY D. by—W. D. B.

LAURA by—Ponco, nineteen, dark.

W. E. by—Violet, brown hair, blue eyes.

M. H. by—Grace, servant, of a loving disposition, fair.

ALFRED by—A. E. C.

LIZZIE by—Mat, twenty-one, light brown hair, blue eyes, good-tempered.

NASCY by—John, twenty-one.

MARY by—George, twenty-two.

RESPONDING GILES by—Kate, eighteen, light blue eyes, fond of home.

PEARL by—Boat Hook Bill, twenty-two, good-looking, tall.

PET by—Blue-Eyed Bill, twenty.

ALBERTA by—B. B., twenty-two, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

IVANHOE by—C. C., twenty-three, fond of home, and loving.

LEONA by—Clement, twenty-six.

ALICE by—Canny Newcastle, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

L. M. by—Alice L., nineteen, dark eyes, good-looking, loving.

FLORRIE by—M. S.

BEATRICE by—W. H.

LAURA by—Alfred A., seventeen, light hair, tall, fond of home.

LILY by—Jonathan, twenty, fond of home and children, light hair, dark eyes.

S. E. by—Mary, nineteen, medium height, light hair, dark.

DORA by—Richard, fond of home and children.

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